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Inquirer interviews Hilary Swank

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Pope discharged from hospital

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Ex-world champ gives Manny 50-50 chance

Across / A18

US soldiers to return to Basilan

Tanong ng Bayan / A9

Price war sinimulan ng Sun, pabor nga ba sa publiko?

CELLCARD KADA ARAW, CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! Text 2910 now!

DOH 'insider' comes out to assail 'Ligtas Buntis'

By Christian V. Esguerra

A FORMER official of the Department of Health yesterday spilled the beans on the government's controversial "Ligtas Buntis" program, calling it "deceptive and highly immoral."

Ligaya Acosta, erstwhile media relations

DOH/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Public schools tap PE tutors for core subjects

By Alcuin Papa

PHYSICAL and health education instructors are forced to teach core subjects, such as English, Math and Science, because of the shortage of public school teachers around the country, the Department of Education said.

This would account for the low scores of

PUBLIC/ A4

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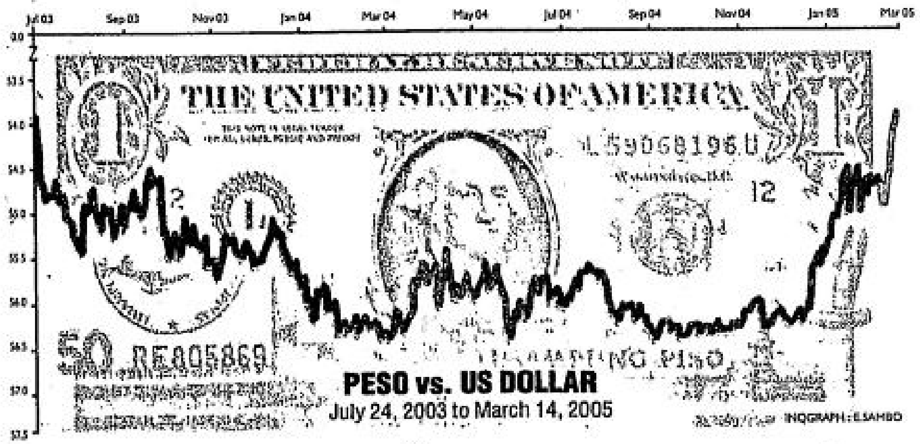

PESO vs. US DOLLAR
July 24, 2003 to March 14, 2005

INQGRAPH: E.SAMBO

Peso breaks into 53 level vs dollar

By Doris Dumlao
Business

BOOSTED by sustained foreign fund inflows and a favorable fiscal outlook in the country, the peso yesterday rose to an intra-day high of 53.86 against the US dollar before staging its strongest close in nearly two years at 53.97.

The peso, which broke into the 53 level against the greenback in the Philippine Dealing System (PDS) for the first time since July 2003, has climbed 4.3 percent this year, making it Asia's best performing currency. Volume at the PDS rose to $416 million from $219 million on Friday when the peso closed at 54.13 against the dollar.

"This is an effect of inflows from IPOs (initial public offerings) and overseas Filipino workers' remittances, plus the weak dollar earlier in the morning," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Traders said dollar inflows into the country had increased significantly due to the interest of foreign investors in the IPO of the Ayala group's Manila Water Co., whose shares will be listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday.

There is also excitement sur-

PESO/ A4

Abu inmates seize prison

3 guards, 2 bandits killed

By Jocelyn R. Uy, Luige A. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora

IT WAS to have been a routine head count, but the guards never got to finish it.

In a flash, some of the country's most dangerous Abu Sayyaf bandits yesterday overpowered their guards, grabbed their weapons and seized control of at least two floors of a maximum security detention quarter at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig.

Three guards and two Abu Sayyaf detainees were killed in the bloody jail breakout attempt, the latest to embarrass President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

It was at about 6:45 a.m., shortly after breakfast, while the guards were conducting a routine count of detainees at the Special Intensive Care Area (Sica) at the camp, when 10 Abu Sayyaf members attacked them.

"This led to ... the takeover," Philippine National Police spokesperson Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said.

Police named some of the most notorious detainees—Commander Kosovo, Commander Global, Muklis Yunos and Commander Robot—as among those behind the takeover.

A jail guard told Reuters that one prisoner stabbed a guard with a metal spike before grabbing his gun and shooting two others dead.

Two other jail guards were wounded.

Officials said that initially, the detainees agreed in principle to lay down their arms but talks later hit a snag after the Abu Sayyaf demanded food first before agreeing to come out.

Police insisted they give up their weapons first.

"Before food, they must lay down their weapons," Bataoil said last night.

As of 10 p.m. last night, negotiations had broken down and police said that while an assault was remote, they were not ruling out such an option.

The Sica holds 435 high-profile inmates, including 129 Abu Sayyaf members.

In the wake of the attempted escape, Interior Secretary Angelo

ABU INMATES/ A6

A JAIL guard, who was shot and wounded by Abu Sayyaf inmates, is brought out of Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig for treatment at a hospital.

FIRST day on the job and already with his hands full, the newly appointed PNP chief, Deputy Director General Arturo Lomibao, arrives at Camp Bagong Diwa.

POLICEMEN take battle positions outside the maximum security detention center in Camp Bagong Diwa after armed Abu Sayyaf bandits attempted to escape.

PHOTOS BY ERIK ARAZAS

Officials knew of plot as early as December

By Armand N. Nocum and Norman Bordadora

IT HAD been planned as early as last December and the plot called for the smuggling into the jail by a woman visitor of two .45 cal. pistols.

And police authorities apparently had even got wind of it.

The mystery is why the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits held in a supposed maximum security detention center at Camp Bagong Diwa still managed to carry out their daring escape attempt.

Suspected Valentine's Day bomber Gappal Bannah, alias Boy Negro, himself an alleged Abu Sayyaf member, told reporters that the ASG planned yesterday's escape attempt as early as four months ago.

He said he was the one who provided the detainees with the two .45-cal. pistols and 50 rounds of ammunition, which a female visitor was to sneak in.

Bannah said ASG leaders Alhamser Manatad Limbong, alias Kosovo, and Jainal Sali (Abu Solaiman) called him at least three times in December.

"They asked me to prepare the guns and ammunition which I was to turn over to a girl who will get it inside the jail," he said.

He said he produced the guns but left it to

OFFICIALS/ A6

Guests miss new PNP chief during turnover ceremony

By Luige A. del Puerto

SAYANG ANG HANDAAN... NAUWI SA BAKBAKAN!

IT WAS an inauspicious if not embarrassing start for Deputy Director General Arturo Lomibao, the new Philippine National Police (PNP) chief.

The fatal shooting of three guards by Abu Sayyaf detainees at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig forced Lomibao to skip the formal turnover ceremony yesterday at Camp Crame, the PNP headquarters in Quezon City.

Instead of swearing on a Bible as planned, Lomibao spent his first day on the job conferring with top officials on how to end the hostage crisis.

He arrived at the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) compound, where the jail is located, in a helicopter at around 9 a.m.

"I came here to personally assess the situation," Lomibao said on the phone. "It's part of the job."

Lomibao promptly sent his apologies to the guests who had come to Camp Crame to witness his formal assumption of command of the 120,000-member PNP. The guests included his

GUESTS/ A21

Pesticide, not cyanide, killed 27 pupils in Bohol, DOH rules

By Christian V. Esguerra and PDI Visayas Bureau

IT WAS pesticide, not cyanide.

The Department of Health yesterday officially ruled out cyanide as the poison behind the deaths of 27 children in Mabini town in Bohol last week.

Authorities earlier said the victims might have suffered cyanide poisoning, which occurs if starchy cassava roots are not properly cooked.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the culprit was a pesticide, most likely carbomate, a deadly chemical commonly found in household and agricultural pesticides.

"Data suggest poisoning secondary to pesticide primarily and possibly an infectious agent," he said at a media briefing.

The poisonous agent was present in the cassava preparation (*maruya balanghoy*) that pupils of the San Jose Elementary School in Mabini ate for recess on March 8, the secretary said.

Dayrit said pesticides were found in the kitchen where the vendors prepared the cassava. But he said there was no evidence to show that they had intentionally contaminated the food.

The National Bureau of Investigation in Central Visayas (NBI-7) had recovered on March 12 one-fourth of the contents of a sachet of 1-2-3 insecticide in the house of vendor Anna Luyong in Barangay Paraiso.

"*Kami gyud ang nakakuha* (We were the ones who recovered it)," said lawyer Rene Mandawe, NBI head investigator of the case.

PESTICIDE/ A21

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon and Visayas will have cloudy skies with rainshowers. Southern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/15/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

RP, China, Vietnam sign joint accord on Spratlys

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Abigail L. Ho

A DIPLOMATIC breakthrough for peace and security in the region.

This was how President Macapagal-Arroyo described the agreement between the Philippines, China and Vietnam to jointly study the oil potential of the disputed Spratly Islands.

The President was presented a copy of the tripartite agreement for joint marine seismic undertaking in the South China Sea signed by the Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC), China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) and Vietnam Oil and Gas Corp. (PetroVietnam) earlier in the day.

"This is a historic event because it is the breakthrough in implementing the provisions of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea among Asean and China, to turn the South China Sea into an area of cooperation rather than an area of conflict," Ms Arroyo said in a speech during awarding ceremonies for outstanding electric cooperatives.

Last week, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo had declared that the Philippines' dispute with China over the Spratlys had been settled with the signing of a joint study agreement between oil exploration firms in the two countries.

The participation of Vietnam was significant because it was the only claimant (the others are Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan) that had frowned on the Philippine-China joint study last year.

Vietnam had claimed the deal would violate the 2002 Code of Conduct signed by the claimants to refrain from actions that could disturb the volatile peace on the islands.

The agreement entered into with Vietnam stipulated that it would not undermine the basic positions held by the respective governments on the South China Sea. Each country will shoulder a third of the cost.

Security fears allayed

Eduardo Mañalac of PNOC brushed aside fears about the security of the oil experts who would conduct the study on the Spratlys where all the claimants, except for Brunei, had troops stationed in the area and where there had been deadly clashes in the past.

The President said the agreement was a also a "breakthrough for our energy independence program."

"One of the elements of this program is to work on strategic alliances with our friends and allies, so that we can have more supply of energy for the region and our country," Ms Arroyo said.

The three-year seismic survey and research area is clearly defined by specific geographic coordinates, spanning about 143,000 square kilometers.

Commercial transaction

While agreeing to jointly conduct research in the area, Mañalac said the three countries would maintain their respective positions with regard to the South China Sea issue.

He stressed that the agreement was a commercial transaction and not at all linked to the political views of each of the national oil firms' governments.

"We're not doing this on account of the dispute. This is a transaction among three national oil companies to see if there are resources to develop (in the area)," he said.

"There are no references to political claims and territorial rights. That's a factor to the quick progress of this agreement," he said.

Although not political in nature, he said the three signatories to the tripartite agreement were well aware that certain issues and even further disputes could come from the other Spratly claimants who were not part of the joint undertaking.

However, he said, the agreement signatories were hopeful the undertaking would serve as a model that other countries could follow, in terms of setting aside political disputes to work together in attaining the goal of Asian energy independence.

"We hope we can apply these principles and most of the conditions in this agreement to form more alliances with other national oil companies," he said.

Under the agreement, PNOC, CNOOC and PetroVietnam would equally share the costs involved in conducting seismic research within the agreement area.

Costs to be determined

The agreement covers pre-exploration activities only and does not involve any drillings or actual explorations.

The entire project cost, Mañalac said, would be determined later in future meetings among the three national oil firms.

Work would be done by a team composed of people from PNOC, CNOOC and PetroVietnam, he said.

Signing the agreement were Mañalac, CNOOC vice president Zhiu Shouwei and PetroVietnam president and chief executive Tran Ngoc Canh.

Senators doubt VAT bill's okay before recess

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SENATORS yesterday doubted they could pass the value-added tax (VAT) bill before their Lenten break on Friday.

"It's unclear to say the least. It's very doubtful (if) we can pass the bill within this session," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said after the caucus of all senators yesterday.

Pimentel said there was no need to hold marathon sessions this week to pass the measure.

"We're not in a hurry to oppress our people so we will only agree to the VAT if it is reasonable," Pimentel said.

The Senate leadership decided to hold a caucus of administration and opposition senators to discuss the contentious issues and hasten the passage of the bill. But opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile walked out of the caucus, saying the debates should be held openly on the floor and recorded to guide questions of interpretation of the law in the future.

"There was hardly any opportunity to clarify the point because everybody was talking, so I felt it was useless to continue my participation in the caucus," Enrile said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago also raised doubts that the administration senators would all vote for the Senate version, which she described as anticonsumer. She said the VAT on power and petroleum would be passed on to consumers.

"Under this Senate version, sales of electricity by generation companies, transmission and distribution companies shall now be subjected to VAT. This price increase will take place together with a new tax which the law euphemistically calls a universal charge. That's a double whammy," Santiago said in her interpellation.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said there were still many issues the senators will try to address in another caucus today and on Wednesday in addition to debates on the floor.

"It is still very fluid; we're looking at it on a per-day basis," Pangilinan said, when asked if the chamber could pass its version before Wednesday, their last session day, or perhaps Friday, which is their last day before the three-week recess.

Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier said it was difficult to say whether the chamber could pass the measure before the Lenten break as Malacañang had hoped.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the senators would "continue to work on it" until the bill was passed.

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Edsa bomb suspect enters guilty plea

By Tarra V. Quismundo

WITHOUT blinking, he owned up to the terror attack that killed four people and injured dozens a month ago.

Gappal Bannah, better known as Boy Negro, yesterday admitted in court his participation in the bombing of an RRCG bus on Edsa, Makati, on Valentine's Day, the only one of the three accused who admitted to the crime in court.

"*Inaamin ko po* (I admit it, your honor)," said Bannah, when asked how he pleaded to charges of multiple murder during his arraignment yesterday in Makati City Regional Trial Court Branch 62.

When asked again after Judge Selma Alaras explained that he could face the death penalty, Bannah gave the same reply.

Answering separate charges of multiple frustrated murder filed against him in the Makati RTC, a family court, Bannah said again: "*Umaamin po ako*(I am admitting it)."

His fellow accused, Gamal Baharan, alias Tapay, and Angelo Trinidad, also known as Abu Khalil, pleaded "not guilty" to the charges.

Bannah, Baharan and Trinidad, suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf Group who allegedly planned and executed the Makati bombing, were arraigned yesterday morning in separate Makati courts where the justice department had filed charges of multiple murder and multiple frustrated murder against them.

They agreed to be arraigned even while their private lawyers were absent from the hearing. The three were represented by lawyer Rainald Paggao from the Public Attorney's Office.

"I admitted (to the charges) because I wanted to help authorities catch the others," said Bannah.

"Many innocent people, children, were hurt... I did not know that was the target, they didn't tell me, I just kept the items," he said in Filipino.

On March 4, Bannah surrendered to local officials of Limbanan, Camarines Sur. He was then turned over to the Department of Justice, where he executed an extrajudicial confession, said State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco.

In an interview after the hearing, Bannah identified his fellow accused—Baharan and Trinidad—as among the men who contacted him to get supplies of explosives.

"They were the ones who asked me to keep bombs. When they needed supplies, they would contact me... they were the ones who assembled and planted them," said Bannah.

Velasco said state prosecutors would ask the court to make Bannah a state witness.

Pagasa explains limits to its forecasting skills

THE PHILIPPINE Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration yesterday cited the "limitations of the science" in defending its "low skills" in making climate forecasts.

Pagasa deputy director for operations Dr. Prisco Nilo said the agency's specialists could accurately predict the weather for up to five days but had difficulty with climate forecasts.

A climate forecast involves predicting the amount of rainfall over a certain period, which is monthly and every six months in the case of the Philippines. A weather forecast involves describing the conditions daily or for up to five days.

Pagasa's climate forecasts are only 30 percent accurate, but this does not make the country's specialists unskilled, Nilo said.

"It was also due to the limitations of the science," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

"Even advanced countries have only 30 to 40 percent accuracy, although the United States is constantly continuing improvements of the science," said Nilo, who is acting Pagasa chief in the absence of Director Graciano Yumul.

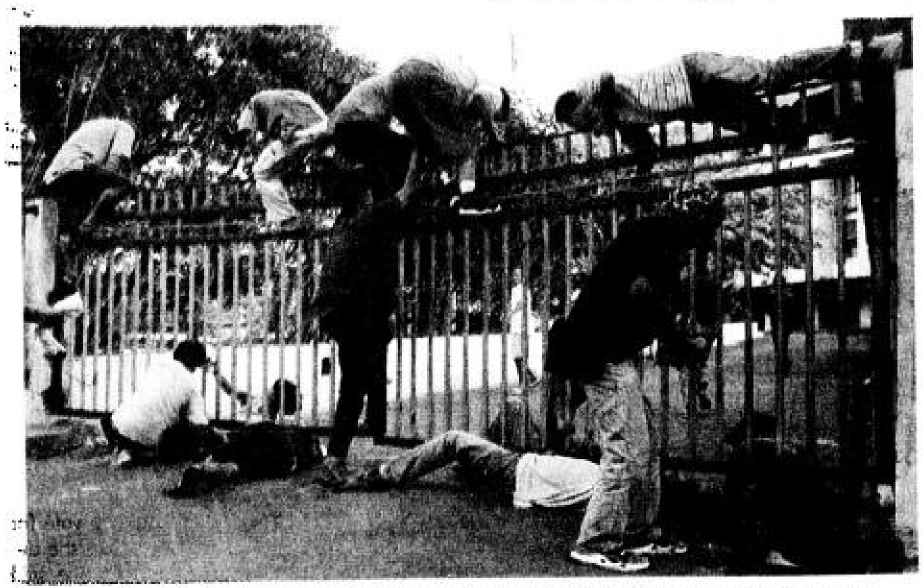
Nilo said the Philippines applies the same forecast models used by the United States and Australia, but there are very few state-of-the-art technologies that can assist in making more accurate climate forecasts.

He said some Pagasa personnel underwent training at Columbia University in New York for climate forecasting, where they received sets of forecast models to be executed in the Philippines.

A senior weather specialist from Pagasa told a gathering of international experts in Mandaluyong City last week that the country's weather bureau had low skills in making forecasts.

Nilo said the speaker was referring to climate forecasts, which Pagasa has been doing for at least five years.

Blanche S. Rivera



NEGROS Occidental farmers barge onto the grounds of the Department of Land Reform main office in Quezon City yesterday to demand an end to the killings and other violent acts committed against them allegedly by their landlords. They also demanded that the Agrarian Reform Law be enforced in their favor.

JOAN BONDOC

Military blames NPA for killings at Luisita

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Blanche S. Rivera

A TOP military official yesterday blamed communist rebels for the murder of two known activists in Tarlac who were helping the striking workers at Hacienda Luisita.

Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez said the military would not benefit from the deaths of Tarlac City Councilor Abelardo Ladera and Fr. William Tadena of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente.

"The NPA apologists are moving heaven and earth to link the Armed Forces, particularly Nolcom, in all unfortunate incidents in central and northern Luzon," Dominguez said in a long text message to reporters yesterday.

"Why the rash accusations? What are they trying to cover up?" he said.

A vigilante group calling itself the Nagkakaisang mga Biktima ng Karahasan ng NPA claimed responsibility for Ladera's death.

Ladera, a Bayan Muna party-list leader, was gunned down March 3.

On Saturday, Tadena, who was involved with Bayan Muna and the human rights group Karapatan, was gunned down on his way home from Mass.

Sheer stupidity

Karapatan-Tarlac spokesperson Emil Paragas blamed Nolcom for the killings and for the creation of the vigilante groups.

But according to Dominguez, Ladera's death could not be blamed on them because "he was shot near the camp."

"If a soldier did (kill Ladera), he must also be charged for sheer stupidity and his commander thrown in jail with him," he said.

Dominguez said that while they suspected Ladera's affiliation with the rebels, "his being alive is certainly important to the AFP."

"His being on the government watch list manifested this," Dominguez said.

The general theorized the NPA rebels killed Ladera since the councilor was no longer useful to them.

"When a member has outgrown his usefulness, he was (sic) killed. Then the NPA apologists weave a telenovela," he said.

The militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) urged Speaker Jose de Venecia to spearhead a full-blown inquiry into the killings a day after Tadena, 37, was shot dead in La Paz, Tarlac, by unknown assassins.

"We strongly urge Speaker De Venecia and his colleagues in Northern and Central Luzon to investigate the spate of political killings and abductions of mass activists in the two regions," said Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap in a press statement.

Open targets

Hicap said forces hostile to left-leaning organizations led by the military were treating aboveground leftist leaders in Central and Northern Luzon as fair game and open targets for state-sponsored terrorism.

"Our colleagues are marked for death by top officials of the Northern Luzon Command. The Nolcom's Death Squad is doing the dirty job for their fascist employers in Malacañang, the National Security Council and the Armed Forces of the Philippines," the militant leader charged.

Political assassination

Tadena, a noted supporter of the striking workers at Hacienda Luisita, was the third victim of political assassination in Central and Northern Luzon within the span of two weeks. On March 3, unidentified assassins killed Ladera, another known supporter of the hacienda workers.

On March 11, Romeo Sanchez, Bayan Muna Northern Luzon coordinator, was shot dead in Baguio City. Also in the past two weeks, Bayan Muna leader in Nueva Ecija Danny Macapagal and Mher Dizon of Anakpawis-Zambales were reportedly abducted by alleged military elements belonging to Nolcom.

Filipino Muslims plead for Tarongoy

COTABATO CITY—A group of influential Filipino Muslims has appealed to Iraqi authorities to help secure the release of Filipino accountant Robert Tarongoy from the hands of his militant captors.

"We call on those who hold Robert Tarongoy captive in Iraq to release him. He is an innocent," said Amina Rasul, chair of the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID), in a statement.

Rasul said PCID had sought the *fatwa* or opinion of an eminent Muslim scholar from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, on the subject of hostage-taking, the killing of innocents and *jihad*.

Rasul said she hoped the media would help Muslim groups reach Tarongoy's captors with Islam's message interpreted in a *fatwa* issued by Dr. Muhammad Abu Laylah, professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religions at Al-Azhar University: "In Islam, *jihad* is not to kill others or to deny their existence or their rights to live and develop their life. It is only to protect the Muslim people against any aggression or invasion."

Tarongoy has been held captive for almost five months by extremists in Iraq. *Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Peso breaks into 53 level vs dollar

From page A1

rounding the IPO of Henry Sy's SM Investment Corp., which kicked off last week and ends Thursday. The offer, which involves the sale of 115 million shares at P250 each, is the biggest in the market's 70-year history, with estimated gross proceeds of P28.75 billion.

"The dollar liquidity is coming not only from foreign investors but from local investors who have dollars and are now converting into pesos," said Wick Veloso, treasurer of HSBC Philippines which is one of the biggest custodians of foreign funds in the country.

"Over the last five years you've seen continued growth in OFW remittances and ... now you have FDIs (foreign direct investments) and portfolio inflows as well," Veloso added.

Roland Avante, treasurer of Chinatrust Commercial Bank Philippines, noted that OFWs had also been sending sums to their families here in time for the school graduations in late March and early April.

"Easily, the next target would be the 53.60-53.70 levels," Avante said.

Traders said the financial market also welcomed Tetangco's statement that the BSP may further ease restrictions on the amount of dollars that local banks could keep.

ACI Philippines, the country's association of foreign exchange traders, earlier asked the BSP to lower its so-called "overbought limit," which is currently set at 2.5 percent of a bank's unimpaired capital or $5 million, whichever is lower. Following the 1997 Asian currency crisis, the BSP imposed restrictions to curb speculative attacks against the peso.

Tetangco, who is scheduled to assume the BSP governorship in July, has acknowledged that the current overbought limit was too restrictive, especially for banks with sizeable trading businesses.

Traders also said the BSP would allow a stronger peso to cut oil import costs after it decided last week against raising interest rates to fight inflation.

"With supply-side factors pushing up inflation, the Philippine government could be more tolerant toward an appreciating currency," said Thomas Lam, treasury economist at United Overseas Bank in Singapore.

Still undervalued

Dilip Shahani, head of HSBC's Asia-Pacific fixed income credit research, yesterday said in a press briefing that despite the peso's sharp appreciation since the start of the year, the local currency was still "undervalued."

"The Philippine currency is always about 15 percent undervalued on a real exchange rate basis," Shahani said.

He said the recent peso rebound should be no cause for alarm to exporters, saying demand for exports driven more by the peso was more a result of global economic developments rather than currency movements.

Veloso said the next support level would be at 53.50, then at 53.30 against the greenback.

"After 52, we'll have the very critical 50 level. After that, the next support level is at 39 and then, it's a free level," Veloso said.

"After 39, you have no support level. I'm not saying I'm being optimistic all the way to 39. What I'm saying is the Philippine foreign exchange market has been victim of negative political news since 1999 when from 39 it (peso) breached a high of 56.50," he said.

'Worst is over'

Against the backdrop of a resurgent peso, Shahani voiced optimism over the country's economic prospects and predicted the government's "fading" fiscal woes would likely result in a one-notch sovereign credit rating upgrade by Moody's Investor Service next year.

"We're not being super-bullish. We are just being practical. The momentum is moving in the right direction," Shahani said, noting that the Philippine Congress was making good progress in recent months toward adopting new revenue-generating measures.

"We are of view that the worst is past for the Philippines," he said.

Presenting to the local media his latest country commentary titled, "The Philippines: Under the Microscope," Shahani said the country's fiscal woes had diverted attention from other more robust building blocks of the economy, such as the telecommunications, property and banking sectors.

"We believe Moody's has been too harsh in its judgment of the Arroyo administration and the ability of Congress to improve the public sector finances," Shahani said.

Last month, Moody's downgraded by two notches the foreign-currency rating for Philippine government bonds. *With reports from Reuters and AP*

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Public schools tap PE tutors for core subjects

From page A1

students in the National Achievement Test (NAT), the High School Readiness Test (HSRT) and other evaluation tests, as well as the low grades of students nationwide.

In a radio interview yesterday morning, Education Secretary Florencio Abad revealed that most of the educators teaching English, Math and Science subjects in public schools did not have skills to handle these subjects.

"[Some] are really teachers in Physical Education and Health subjects. But they are being pushed to teach Science, Math and English because of the lack of teachers in some provinces," Abad said.

It was reported that scores for the NAT, given to Grade 5 and fourth year high school students, and the HSRT, given to first year students, had been low in the past few years without any significant improvement. Worse, students around the country floundered in the tests, with scores ranging from 30 to 50 percent in the three core subjects.

10,000 teaching jobs

Abad also said the DepEd would focus on recruiting more teachers in English, Science and Math for public schools around the country for the next school year. At least 10,000 teachers should be hired before school year 2005-06 opens in order to ease the lack of teaching personnel, he said.

With the new teachers, the department hopes the students will fare better in the next NAT and HSRT, the secretary said.

But the DepEd is hard put to recruit more teachers. Juan Miguel Luz, education undersecretary for finance, told reporters yesterday that Congress had not approved the department's request for an additional P1-billion budget for the 10,000 teacher positions.

Unless Congress approves the extra budget, Luz said, the DepEd could not take in new hires since the amount would be used for their salaries.

At present, he said, the country was short 27,000 teachers nationwide. But because of the government's austerity measures, the DepEd decided to recruit only 10,000.

"We are hoping that Congress would sign our P1-billion request by April so we could get new teachers before the next school year starts," Luz said.

Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a photo caption on the front page—"Gold Quill Awards"—should have included the names of Advertising Board of the Philippines (Ad Board) chair Raul Alvarez and former Ad Board vice chair Alvin Manacsa as the recipients of the award for the Cannes Lions in Manila. The INQUIRER, together with the Ad Board, organized the 2004 Cannes Lions in Manila Advertising Festival.

* * *

IN THE MARCH 13 issue, a photo caption on the front page misstated the province where Bacarra, the hometown of 2nd Lt. Geraldine Abigail Hallar, is located. Bacarra is in Ilocos Norte, not Ilocos Sur.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses: glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address: rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Bishop raps Defensor

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Bishop Ramon Villena has rebuked Environment Secretary Michael Defensor for claiming at a Senate committee hearing that the bishop favored the resumption of large-scale mining in Nueva Vizcaya.

In a letter to Defensor, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, Villena said he continued to oppose the proposed mining projects promoted by the government.

"I am deeply disturbed, to say the least, at your baseless and unfounded statement. I have steadfastly maintained a vigorous position against the continuance of mining operations in our country," Villena wrote.

Defensor reportedly made the statement in a March 2 Senate hearing that tackled the government's plan to revitalize the mining industry in the country.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Team arrives to help Filipinos return to Malaysia

AN 11-MEMBER Malaysian team arrived in Zamboanga City on Saturday to speed up the paper work for the return of the overseas Filipino workers expelled from that country, the Department of Labor and Employment said.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the Malaysians brought along computers and biometric equipment to help them in establishing the identities of the Filipino workers who intend to return to Malaysia. The Malaysians have set up shop at one-stop processing centers in Zamboanga City and Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.

The Filipinos were deported after Malaysian authorities began a nationwide drive against illegal aliens.

Undersecretary for Labor Relations Manuel Imson said to date, 83 returnees were awaiting the issuance of their passports preparatory to returning to their jobs in Sabah.

Jerome Aning

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 15, 2005
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Num 21:4-9
Gospel: John 8:21-30

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I am going away, and though you look for me, you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come." The Jews wondered, "Why does he say that we can't come where he is going? Will he kill himself?"

But Jesus said, "You are from below and I am from above; you are of this world and I am not of this world. That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. And you shall die in your sins unless you believe that I am He."

They asked him, "Who are you?"; and Jesus said, "Just what I have told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the One who sent me is truthful and everything I learned from him, I proclaim to the world."

They didn't understand that Jesus was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of myself, but I say just what the Father taught me. He who sent me is with me and has not left me alone; because I always do what pleases him." As Jesus spoke like this, many believed in him.

Commentary

Jesus knows—he can read all the signs—that he is going to die and that they are going to kill him. Yet it is easier for all of us to ignore our choices and complicity with evil and so they say—is he going to kill himself? And Jesus tells them that they will die in their sins—unless you believe that I am He! He is declaring himself to be the Holy One of God. And he tells them that he will be lifted up (crucified) and then they will know that he is the Son of Man, that he is the Holy One of God and that he only does what his Father tells him. He is obedient, unto death and he does only what pleases God and will never be alone, even as he dies alone. Jesus, you are the Lord of life, yet you die as one of us, with us so that we might not be bound by death and hate. Do not let us die in our sins, but come to believe that you are the Judge of Life, the Son of Man, crucified and bound to those who suffer at the hands of those who do not believe in life or cherish it. Make us your followers and save us.

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Abu inmates seize prison

From page A1

Reyes ordered the preventive suspension of the warden, Supt. Romeo Elisan, and four other jail officers.

Two of the ASG members who grabbed the guards' weapons were identified by police as Kosovo, or Alhamser Limbong, and Kair Abdulgaffar. Both are facing charges of kidnapping and serious illegal detention.

Limbong is accused of involvement in a mass kidnapping in 2001-2002 in Palawan that left several hostages dead, including two Americans, and in the bombing of the SuperFerry 14 a year ago that killed more than 100 people in the Philippines' worst terror attack.

Another kidnap suspect but not an ASG member, identified as Piga Edcel Manuel Tomas, also took part in the mutiny, police said.

"I'd like to emphasize that these are groups of terrorists, hardened and dangerous criminals. We are not going to think twice to launch an assault," Bataoil said.

He spoke to reporters while Gov. Parouk Hussin of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Anak Mindanao party-list Rep. Mujib Hataman were negotiating with the ASG to persuade the group to surrender.

By mid-afternoon, officials said they had obtained an agreement from the detainees that they would surrender and lay lown their weapons.

Daylong standoff

But the standoff persisted as ight fell, or about 10 hours after he drama began.

Hundreds of police, including harpshooters perched on roofs, ad surrounded the facility.

"There was some delay because hey feared for their safety," said Director Avelino Razon, chief of he National Capital Region Police Office.

Under the agreement to end the laylong standoff, two inmates vere to address the media, and the thers were then to emerge in roups of about 10, said Mujib Hataman, who was negotiating vith the inmates by telephone.

The prisoners had also denanded assurances they vouldn't be harmed if they surendered, speedy trials and the ight to air their grievances to auhorities, he said.

Bataoil had earlier warned of a ajor assault if the inmates idn't give up their weapons.

Abu Sayyaf threat

A spokesperson for the ASG andits, detainee Hazdi Daie, hreatened in a telephone interiew that if police stormed the uilding, "then you will hear ombings all over Manila."

Daie said on dzBB radio that he ASG bandits were holding bout 100 hostages but police deied this, saying only inmates reained inside the aging building.

An armored personnel carrier noved to the front of the teel-fenced detention center. Another was positioned outside the ate.

In a building across from the etention center, about two ozen police took cover. Several mbulances were on standby.

The Abu Sayyaf is notorious for deadly bombings and ransom kidnappings in which some hostages had been beheaded. A number of Abu Sayyaf suspects had managed to escape from jails.

Dilapidated jails

Two years ago, a top terror suspect, Indonesian Fathur Rohman Al Ghozi, escaped from PNP headquarters in Camp Crame while serving a 12-year term for possession of explosives.

He was killed in a shootout with police a few months later.

Last April, more than 50 inmates, led by suspected Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, used a smuggled pistol to flee from a jail on Basilan island.

Last December, a suspect who was being interrogated about a bomb found on a bus was fatally shot at another detention center in Metro Manila after allegedly killing a guard.

Jails in the country are often dilapidated, with inadequate and sometimes corrupt staff.

Gunshots heard

Bataoil said the first two floors of the besieged building held 129 ASG members while the third and fourth floors held suspected members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and several Chinese arrested for drug trafficking.

A series of gunshots that ensued between the ASG and the jail guards killed JO4 Edgar Dajay, JO1 Rogelio de la Cruz and JO1 Amadeo Salapate.

Salapate was pronounced dead on arrival at the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City, Supt. Agrimero Cruz Jr., information chief of the NCRPO, said.

Dajay and De la Cruz died on the spot, Cruz said.

Wounded were JO1 Albert Lubrio and JO1 Sheroky Bilidli.

Lubrio was rushed to the Makati Medical Center while Bilidli was brought to the Sadili Hospital in Bicutan, Taguig.

Not face to face

Bataoil named one of the ASG fatalities as Burnham Hadji Abdullah Paraha. The name of the other ASG casualty had yet to be determined.

Cruz revealed that the authorities and the ASG men did not negotiate face to face.

"They were all behind corners of two adjacent buildings. We could hear each other that way without compromising the safety of the negotiators," Cruz said.

Hundreds of civilians, mostly residents from the housing facilities in the camp, gathered on a nearby hill where the NCRPO staff house is located, to watch the unfolding drama.

They patiently waited for the outcome of the negotiations that began at around 11 a.m., getting excited whenever the Special Action Force (SAF) teams and the Regional Special Action Unit (RSAU) of the PNP looked like they were preparing for an assault.

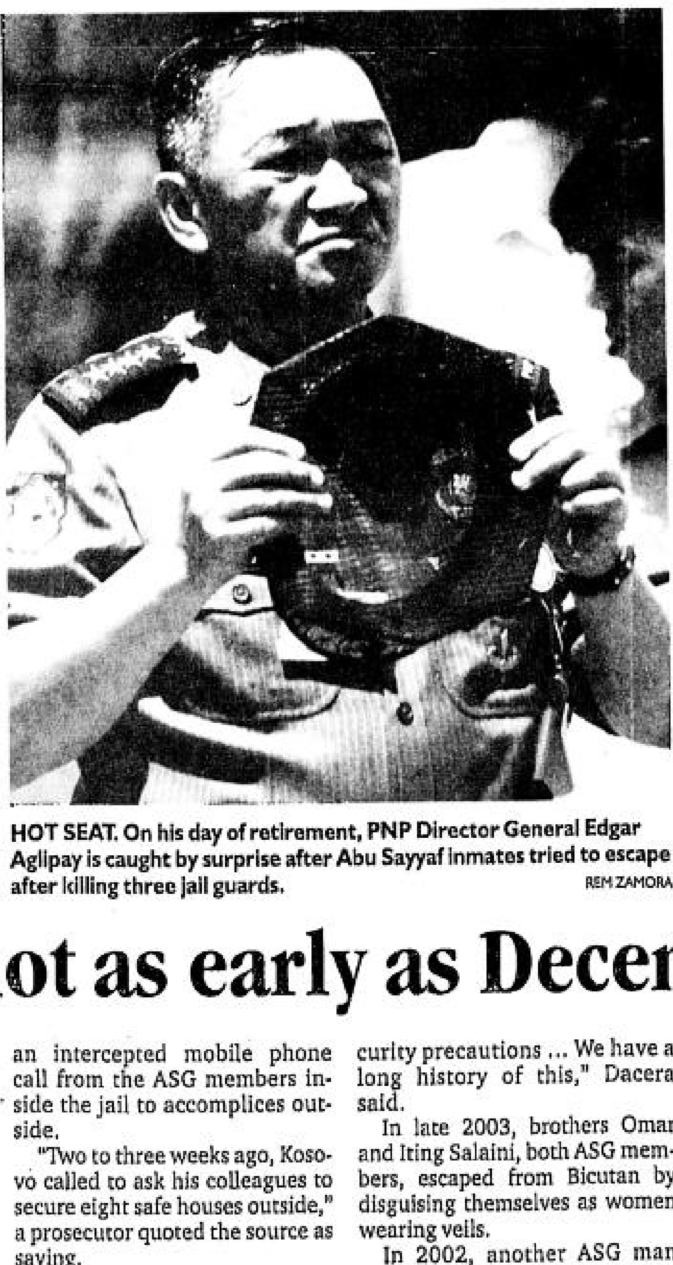
Children at play

As the day wore on, children began playing on the hill, unmindful of the tense situation.

Cruz said that the first few minutes of the negotiations were tense, but the atmosphere eventually became more "cordial" when government negotiators Hussin and Hataman arrived.

2 P.M.: The first deadline lapses and members of the PNP assault team prepare to enter the BJMP facility. REM ZAMORA

A POLICE armored vehicle enters the prison facility where jailed Abu Sayyaf bandits were holed up after overpowering guards in a bloody escape attempt. ERIK ARAZAS



HOT SEAT. On his day of retirement, PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay is caught by surprise after Abu Sayyaf inmates tried to escape after killing three jail guards. REM ZAMORA

Fire jail warden, senators demand

By TJ Burgonio

SENATORS yesterday called for the sacking of the chief of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology after the bloody escape attempt by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits at their detention center.

Firing BJMP Director Arturo Alit will serve as a warning to future jail chiefs to prevent a repetition of "what's becoming a hilarious system of securing detainees," Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said.

"If only the guards will be held liable, this will happen again and again," the chair of the committee on public order and illegal drugs told reporters.

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said: "Heads must roll … President Macapagal-Arroyo must step in and sort out the mess that led to this farce."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense and security, called for a review of jail facilities, equipment and the expertise of guards.

Biazon asked why armed guards had to enter the cells of prisoners in Camp Bagong Diwa. "This is not the practice anywhere in the world relative to dealing with prisoners," he said.

Reyes confirmation

Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes is expected to be grilled on the jail siege when he appears today for confirmation hearings before the Commission on Appointments' subcommittee on local government, senators said.

"It won't be avoidable for Reyes to explain why security lapses at the BJMP are becoming too often," Sen. Panfilo Lacson said.

"The theme song for that is Gary Valenciano's 'Di Na Natuto,'" Lacson said.

Officials knew of plot as early as December

rom page A1

ngelo Trinidad, alias Abu Khalil, vho is also accused in the Feb. 14 ombing of a passenger bus in Makati City, to give it to the girl.

Bannah was interviewed at the Department of Justice where he led a counteraffidavit to multile murder and frustrated murer charges he is facing in relaion to the Makati blast.

ail wardens alerted

The National Capital Region olice Office chief Director Avelio Razon, said the Philippine Naional Police had warned Metro Manila jail officials of the escape lot.

"This was as early as December et," he said. "We informed the varden and the camp commaner and met with them to discuss dded security and the alleged presence of firearms [behind bars]."

"Still, this happened," Razon said.

Breakout afoot

Camp Bagong Diwa, the headquarters of the NCRPO, holds such notorious ASG commanders as Kosovo, Global and Robot, and suspected terrorist Muklis Yunos.

Razon's quarters is on a hill overlooking the jail facility.

Even DOJ prosecutors sensed a breakout was afoot.

"Two weeks ago, we warned the jail guards twice about an attempt to escape," Prosecutor Peter Medalle said. "We advised them not to mingle with the prisoners while carrying firearms."

Phone call intercepted

The prosecutors said informants had also told them about an intercepted mobile phone call from the ASG members inside the jail to accomplices outside.

"Two to three weeks ago, Kosovo called to ask his colleagues to secure eight safe houses outside," a prosecutor quoted the source as saying.

When the prosecutors notified officials of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology about it, they were said to have remarked that their area of control only covered the jail—not areas outside.

Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera said a series of previous jailbreaks and escape attempts should have alerted the BJMP to the dangers of an escape.

No room for laxity

"We should be more stringent in observing ordinary security precautions … We have a long history of this," Dacera said.

In late 2003, brothers Omar and Iting Salaini, both ASG members, escaped from Bicutan by disguising themselves as women wearing veils.

In 2002, another ASG man tried to run away from a courtroom, and in February 2004, BJMP guards recovered from ASG men improvised plastic keys that could open handcuffs.

Dacera said they would require the BJMP to submit a report to the judge on the failed jailbreak. "Primarily, it should be the warden who should be held liable," he said.

Buying their story

Dacera urged the media against buying the Abu Sayyaf detainees' claim that they were innocent of the charges against them and they took over the jail because their cases had been dragging.

"The cases, including the kidnapping of school kids in Tumahubong (Basilan) are already in an advanced stage. It is now the turn of the defense panel to present their witnesses," he said.

"Let's not make a political issue out of this. This is strictly a common crime, a heinous criminal offense," Dacera said.

"They are violent criminals, violent terrorist criminals … They are motivated by a higher cause which they believe in."

Guards too lax

BJMP Director Arturo Alit said an investigation was under way into alleged procedural lapses of jail officials and that announcements on the culpability of jail officials would be made at the proper time.

Dacera suggested that the BJMP guards might have been lax in dealing with the ASG detainees, whom he described as ruthless "warriors."

He claimed the guards might have grown friendly, thus giving the Abu Sayyaf the opportunity to bring in mobile phones and even guns into the jail.

"The Filipino nature is to be kind to criminals," Dacera said, adding that in the United States, suspected terrorists were brought to court in body harnesses.

In the case of the ASG, Dacera claimed that not only were the BJMP guards lenient but that even the judge handling their cases had a habit of offering them snacks and drinks.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Plot to kill Chavit aired in Erap trial

By Nelson F. Flores

CHARLIE "Atong" Ang and former Philippine National Police chief Sen. Panfilo Lacson plotted to kill Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson in 2000.

This was the testimony of Sen. Alfredo Lim, interior secretary during the administration of former President Joseph Estrada at the latter's plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan yesterday.

According to Lim, Singson had asserted that it was Ang, a known Estrada crony, and Lacson who had plotted to kill him on the night of Oct. 3, 2000, on San Marcelino Avenue in Manila, and that Estrada knew of the plot.

Lim said Singson made the assertion at a meeting at the latter's house in Blue Ridge, Quezon City, in which Caloocan City Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio and Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynares Jr. were present.

"They won't have the guts if they don't have the blessing of Estrada," Lim said, quoting Singson on the alleged roles of Ang and Lacson in the plot.

Lim said he was surprised by Singson's allegation, prompting him to ask why Ang, Lacson and Estrada would want him dead.

Singson, he said, replied that Ang wanted to kill him because of his opposition to the Bingo 2-Ball project, while Lacson was trying to raise funds for his own presidential bid.

Ang had reportedly thought up the Bingo 2-Ball project ostensibly to kill *jueteng*, the illegal numbers game. Instead of giving a Bingo 2-Ball franchise to Singson, however, Estrada reportedly gave it to Chavit's political opponents in Ilocos Sur who were his own cousins.

Lim said he reported his conversation with Singson to Estrada on Oct. 8. He said the President was surprised by the allegations since he (Singson) was a close friend.

Estrada, he said, had stressed that he had nothing to do with the attempt on Singson's life.

After his meeting with Estrada, Lim said he returned to Singson's residence to inform him of Estrada's decision to have Ang and Lacson investigated.

He said that while talking about the President's reaction, he made a thumbs-down gesture indicating that a thorough investigation of Ang and Lacson would be undertaken.

Lim's thumbs-down sign became the subject of controversy after Singson interpreted it to mean Estrada had ordered Ang's death in a bid to appease him.

"The thumbs-down signal did not mean the President wanted Ang dead. What [I] meant was that Ang would be investigated," Lim said.

Armed men in civilian clothes in three vehicles stopped Singson's SUV in a dimly lit portion of San Marcelino Avenue for allegedly beating the red light and illegally using blinkers.

The armed men tried to take Singson to Camp Crame but the governor, sensing trouble, refused to alight from his vehicle and called instead on some Ilocos Sur mayors to come to his rescue.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said Lim's testimony showed there had been an ambush attempt on Singson and it only affirmed "our claim about the incident, and we are thankful to Senator Lim for that."

But for defense lawyers, Lim's testimony was heaven-sent.

Lawyer Jose Flaminiano, head of the defense panel, said Lim's testimony proved that he did not meet with Singson to dissuade him from going against Estrada and that during that meeting, Singson aired his grievances against Estrada.

Lacson, for his part, denied Lim's testimony, saying, "First, it's not true. Second, his basis is hearsay, so I don't see any probative value."

"It doesn't bother me. Imagine, he was quoting actually Governor Singson and I think the court should appreciate which has probative value and which has no [probative value]," Lacson told reporters. *With TJ Burgonio*

4 Pinoys beheaded

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia—Four Filipinos convicted of murdering a compatriot were beheaded by the sword Monday in the western Saudi city of Taef, the interior ministry said.

Miguel Fernandez, Sergio Aldana, Wilfredo Batista and Antonio Alviza were convicted of murdering Jaimie de la Cruz "by stabbing him repeatedly until he died," said a ministry statement carried by the SPA official news agency.

They "stole all his money," the statement added.

The latest executions bring to 25 the number of beheadings announced by Saudi authorities so far this year. Thirty-five people were beheaded in the kingdom in 2004, according to an Agence France-Presse tally based on official statements. AFP

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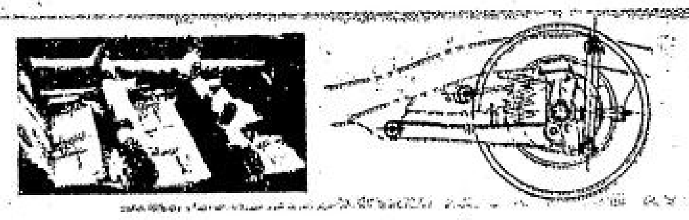

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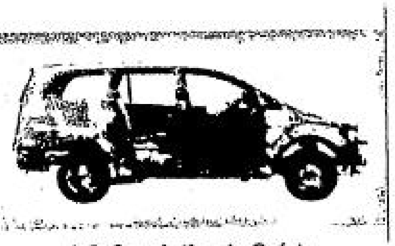

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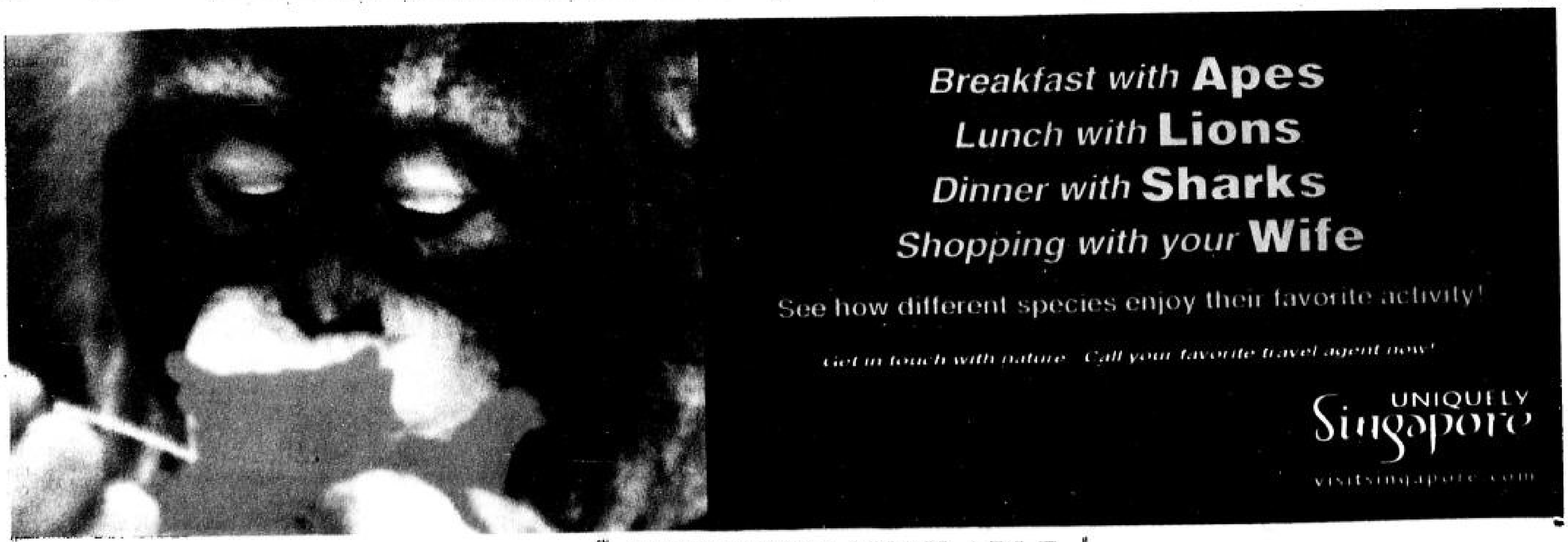
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

China passes Taiwan antisecession law

BEIJING—China's parliament Monday passed a law giving its military the legal basis to attack Taiwan if it moves toward independence, a day after President Hu Jintao told the army to prepare for war.

The National People's Congress passed the legislation as it closed its 10-day annual session, with an overwhelming majority of 2,896 votes for the law and none against. Two delegates abstained.

The text of the 10-article law, according to the official Xinhua news agency, calls for the use of "non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," if all else fails.

This will be necessary "in the event that the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China," the law said.

Military action could also be taken if "major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted."

The law does not spell out what is meant by "non-peaceful means" but analysts believe it would cover anything from a naval blockade to surgical missile strikes and an all-out invasion.

The law takes effect immediately.

The rubber-stamp parliament also approved a 12.6 percent increase in military spending this year to 244.65 billion yuan ($29.5 billion).

Premier Wen Jiabao insisted at a media conference afterwards that the law was aimed at "strengthening" relations and was not a "war bill."

"This law is meant to strengthen and promote cross-straits relations. This law is for peaceful reunification. It's not targeted against the people of Taiwan nor is it a war bill," he said.

"This law is to contain and oppose Taiwan separatist forces. Only by containing and opposing Taiwan separatist forces can the Taiwan Strait have peace," Wen said.

Hu, however, told the army on Sunday to prepare for war, in remarks after he was appointed China's top military chief that apparently referred to Taiwan.

"We shall step up preparations for possible military struggle and enhance our capabilities to cope with crises, safeguard peace, prevent wars and win the wars if any," Hu said.

Beijing considers Taiwan part of its territory despite their split in 1949 after a civil war and has repeatedly warned it could retake the island by force.

Taiwan reacted with anger to the passing of the anti-secessionist law and called for one million people to rally in protest.

"The law is tantamount to authorization of war... as the law's essence is allowing adoption of 'non-peaceful' means against the island if necessary," Cabinet spokesperson Cho Jung-tai told reporters.

"All people in Taiwan are against the legislation, and we believe the world community also opposes it," Cho said.

A VISITOR stands in front of a wall depicting an engraving of the Chinese Revolution March 14 in Shanghai, China. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Monday said China's newly passed antisecession law authorizing force against Taiwan was not a "war bill." AFP

Taiwan Vice President Annette Lu said Sunday the law went against the United States' Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), adopted after Washington switched its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979.

The act stipulates that a major prerequisite for US recognition of China is that Beijing handles Taiwan issues by peaceful means.

The United States criticized both Beijing and Taipei for ratcheting up the rhetoric.

"We have said to both parties that it is not helpful to have unilateral steps that raise tensions across the straits," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told ABC television, deeming the law "not necessary."

"Clearly it raises tensions. And it's not necessary or a good thing to raise tensions," she said before departing for a week-long, six-nation trip to Asia, which includes a stop in Beijing.

Japan, a major base for US forces, also voiced concern at the law's approval, calling on its neighbors to desist from military action.

"I wish both parties would work toward a peaceful solution and I hope that this law will not have negative effects," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said in Tokyo.

Wen made clear the law was an "internal affair" and warned against any "direct or indirect interference" over Taiwan, singling out the US-Japan security alliance.

Last month, the United States and Japan jointly issued a statement which described Taiwan as a common security issue amid China's military build-up. *AFP*

Dalai Lama not seeking Tibet independence

BEIJING—Exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama defended his moderate approach to China's communist government while calling on Beijing to use common sense and allow him back into the country in comments published Monday.

The Dalai Lama also reiterated he was not seeking Tibet's independence from China in an interview with the South China Morning Post.

"This is the message I wish to deliver to China. I am not in favor of separation," he said. "Tibet is a part of the People's Republic of China. It is an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China.

"Tibetan culture and Buddhism are part of Chinese culture. Many young Chinese like Tibetan culture as a tradition of China."

DALAI LAMA

Despite insisting he is seeking autonomy for Tibet within China, Beijing frequently accuses him of separatism and demands he definitively give up aspirations for independence and recognize Tibet as part of China.

His supporters have long accused Beijing of trying to wipe out Tibet's Buddhist-based culture through political and religious repression.

"As the material development of China moves forward we gain materially, like the (Qinghai to Lhasa) railway. If we were a separate country it would be very difficult and we would not benefit," he said in explaining his stance.

The Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India has many factions and while moderates seek a solution with Beijing, radicals, like the Tibetan Youth Congress, oppose compromise.

The Dalai Lama insisted his moderate approach was in the best interests of Tibetans.

"The Tibetan youth organisation criticises me as taking this approach out of desperation," he said. "No, it comes out of a broader interest." *AFP*

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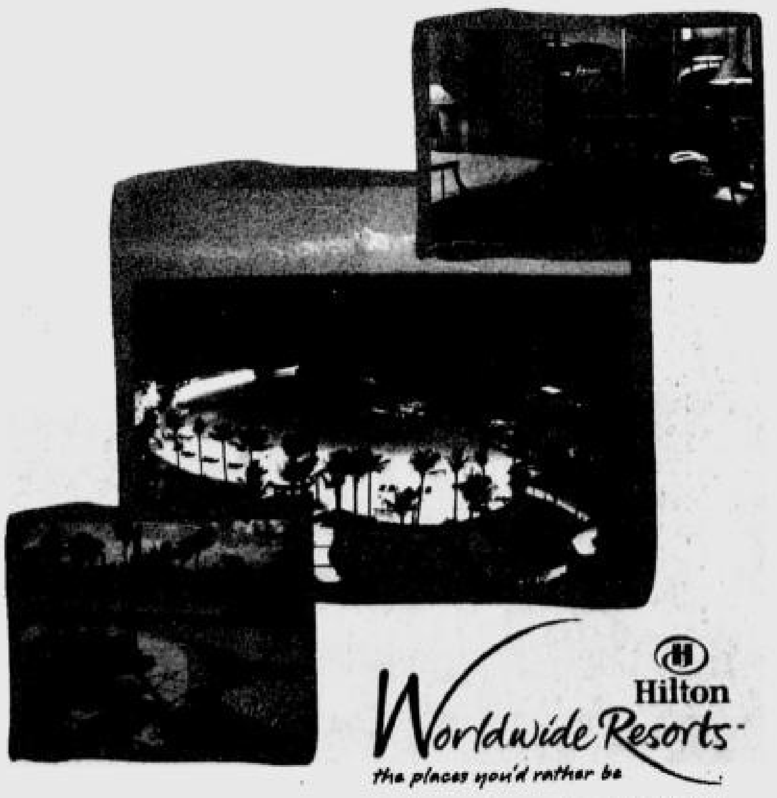

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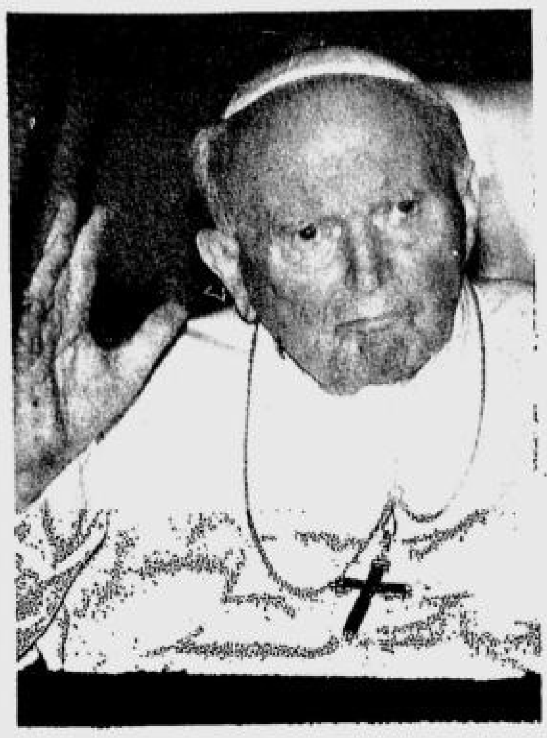

POPE John Paul waving to well-wishers as he leaves Rome's Gemelli Hospital March 13, 18 days after he underwent throat surgery to relieve severe breathing problems. REUTERS

Pope leaves hospital, looks lively

ROME—Pope John Paul, looking fairly alert and waving to crowds of well-wishers, left hospital on Sunday and returned to the Vatican 18 days after he underwent throat surgery to relieve severe breathing problems.

The 84-year-old Pope left the hospital riding in the front seat of a grey van just five hours after his departure was announced.

He was wearing his traditional white cassock and blessed the crowds from behind the glass as his motorcade made its way to the Vatican some 4 km away.

"I was very impressed with him because he looks quite lively, he didn't look very sick," said Roger, a British tourist who saw the Pope as he returned to the Vatican. "I am very amazed to see him. I'm very, very happy I saw him."

In what appeared to be an attempt to reassure Catholics, a Vatican television cameraman sat behind the Pope in the van and broadcast live footage of the back of the Pope's head as he waved and blessed people lining the motorcade route.

Earlier on Sunday, the Pope reassured Catholics himself by speaking directly to the faithful from his hospital window for the first time since he underwent a tracheotomy on Feb. 24.

But it was still unclear when and how the Pope, whose breathing problems were exacerbated by Parkinson's disease, will resume his ceremonial activities as head of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Vatican has said he will decide himself what role he will play in Holy Week activities which begin on Palm Sunday, March 20, and end a week later on Easter Sunday.

For the first time in his 26-year-old papacy he has delegated senior cardinals to preside at nearly all Holy Week services—one of the busiest periods of the Church calendar.

He is expected to make brief appearances at some of them and may be linked up to the faithful at others via television. *AP*

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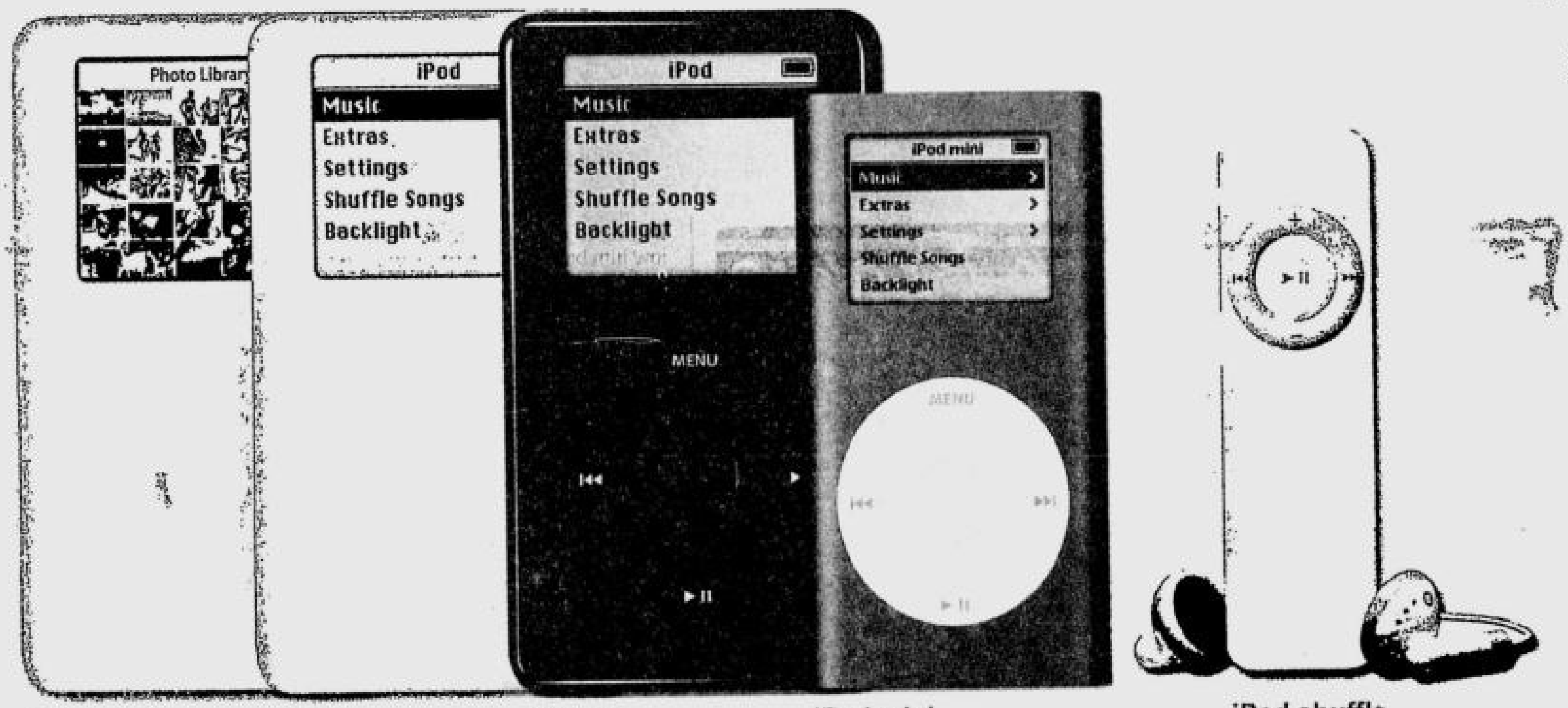

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Israel has plans to attack Iran, says London Times

LONDON—Israel has drawn up plans for a combined air and ground attack on Iranian nuclear installations if diplomacy fails to halt Tehran's atomic program, London's Sunday Times said.

The newspaper said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his inner Cabinet had given "initial authorization" for a unilateral attack on Iran at a private meeting last month.

US officials have indicated they would not stand in Israel's way if international diplomatic efforts to halt Iran's nuclear projects fail, the paper said.

"If all efforts to persuade Iran to drop its plans to produce nuclear weapons should fail, the US administration will authorize Israel to attack," the paper quoted an Israeli security source as saying.

Tehran says its nuclear activities are aimed only at electricity generation but Washington and the European Union suspect Iran could use its program to make atomic bombs.

Iran has frozen nuclear enrichment while it tries to reach a negotiated settlement on its nuclear program with Britain, France and Germany.

Washington on Friday joined the drive to put pressure on Iran by offering it a start to World Trade Organization membership talks and access to civil aircraft and spare parts if it abandons its most sensitive nuclear activities.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she was not aware of the Israeli plans.

"The president of course doesn't take any options off the table, but I think he's made very clear that, from our point of view, this is a problem that can be resolved diplomatically," she said on the CBS "Face the Nation" program.

The Sunday Times said Israeli tactics included raids by elite commando units and air strikes by F-15 jets using bunker busting bombs to penetrate underground facilities.

It said Israeli forces had been simulating attacks on a mock-up of Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant in the last few months.

Israel, which says Iran is very close to being able to make a nuclear bomb, played down the report.

Asked if there was a possibility that Israel could attack Iranian nuclear installations, Vice Premier Shimon Peres said: "I don't think so."

Israel is believed to be the only country in the region with nuclear weapons, though it has not confirmed or denied their existence.

Israeli warplanes bombed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in a raid in 1981 to prevent it from making atomic bombs.

US Vice President Dick Cheney said in January that there was concern Israel might attack Iran if it "became convinced the Iranians had significant nuclear capability." *Reuters*

Ex-Kosovo PM pleads not guilty to war crimes

THE HAGUE—Kosovo's former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj pleaded not guilty at The Hague tribunal on Monday to charges of murder, rape and deportation of Serbs when he was a rebel leader in the 1998-99 separatist war.

Haradinaj, a former regional commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), pleaded not guilty to 17 counts of crimes against humanity and 20 counts of violations of the laws or customs of war at the UN war crimes court.

HARADINAJ

Two of Hardinaj's former KLA aides, Idriz Balaj and Lahi Brahimaj, pleaded not guilty at the same hearing to 16 counts of crimes against humanity, including detention, deportation, murder and rape, and 19 counts of violations of the laws or customs of war.

The three men, named in the same indictment, are accused of mounting a violent campaign to expel ethnic Serbs and Roma from Kosovo in 1998. Prosecutors say the KLA conducted a campaign of intimidation, abduction, imprisonment and torture.

"The three accused pleaded not guilty to each and every one of the counts brought against them in the indictment," judge Carmel Agius said after they had entered their pleas.

Haradinaj, considered a hero by many Kosovo Albanians, is the most senior former Kosovo guerrilla to be indicted over the war against Serb forces. He resigned as prime minister last week to face the charges.

Balaj, commander of a special KLA unit called the "Black Eagles," and Brahimaj, a relative of Haradinaj and deputy KLA commander of his Dukagjin region, surrendered to the court with Haradinaj last week.

The rape charges against all three relate to an alleged assault of a Roma woman by Balaj.

Haradinaj, 36, whose surrender was applauded by the United Nations, Nato and the European Union, has called evidence against him an attempt to discredit the KLA by those close to former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

Milosevic has been on trial at the Hague since February 2002, charged with genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. *Reuters*

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GRIEF AFTER US SHOOTING
Amber Herman cries at a makeshift memorial outside the Sheraton hotel, March 13, in Brookfield, Wis. Herman's father was a friend of one of the victims of a shooting Saturday. A gunman opened fire on Saturday at a church service being held at the hotel, killing at least seven people before killing himself. AP

Jewish settlement inside barrier

JERUSALEM — The largest Jewish West Bank settlement, Maaleh Adumim, will be included on the "Israeli side" of a barrier Israel is building around Jerusalem, Israel's vice premier said Monday.

The route of the Jerusalem barrier, including the loop around Maaleh Adumim, was presented late Sunday to senior Cabinet ministers for approval. Israel Radio said the ministers approved the route drawn by the National Security Council, but an aide to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the decision was not final.

Under the plan, the Jerusalem segment would include Maaleh Adumim, take a chunk out of the Palestinian town of Bethlehem south of Jerusalem, and cut off traditionally Arab east Jerusalem from the West Bank. The Palestinians seek east Jerusalem, all of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for a future state.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat warned that the Jerusalem segment, as planned, could destroy efforts to revive peace talks. "This is a policy of dictation and not negotiation," Erekat said. "This prejudges and prejudices the outcome of permanent status negotiations."

Israel began building a separation barrier in the West Bank two years ago, saying its aim was to keep out Palestinian attackers. Palestinians say Israel could have built the barrier on its territory if the only concern was security. They say the real intention was to grab West Bank land and draw a final border without waiting for a peace deal. One-third of the barrier has been completed. *AP*

One man is accused, but Argentine's 'dirty war' is on trial

By Daniel Trotta

MADRID—Children were tortured in front of their parents. Pregnant women were kidnapped and had their babies. Political prisoners were held where they could hear the screams of their fellow captives.

Those are some of the horrific details that witnesses have reported in the landmark trial of 58-year-old former Argentine navy captain Adolfo Scilingo, which ended last week.

Only one man has stood in the dock, but it seems an entire military regime is being put on trial.

"I have reached the conclusion that (the aim of the trial) is to judge a regime, a system, an activity which is surely reprehensible... through Adolfo Scilingo," defense lawyer Fernando Martinez-Morata said in his closing argument on Thursday.

That is largely by the design of the plaintiffs who have brought the genocide, torture and terrorism trial against Scilingo at Spain's high court. A verdict is expected on April 19, and prosecutors are seeking a sentence of 9,138 years.

Meanwhile, the victims of the "dirty war" carried out by the 1976-83 military junta against a leftist insurgency are torn by the trial, at once thirsty for justice but also traumatized by reliving the ordeal and saddened that only one man is on trial, far from home.

In any case victims say it is a rare chance for Argentina to confront its past because amnesty laws have impeded prosecutions at home.

"The whole system is being tried. It's just that Scilingo was the only one to confess," said Carlota Quesada, who is searching for a lost grandchild she believes was born to her daughter Graciela Quesada, who was kidnapped while pregnant and later disappeared.

"This is universal justice," she said.

The trial is the first in Spain to rest on the principle of universal justice, that the most heinous crimes can be prosecuted anywhere in the world, and it is not easy for Quesada to sit through it.

"I am broken to pieces. Every time someone testifies, we go through it all again. We don't know where our loved ones are."

Some torture victims, like 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, are at ease telling their story, eager that the abuses be revealed.

Others are more hesitant for obvious reasons. One woman, who admitted belonging to the Montoneros guerrilla group, described how she was tied naked to a metal bed and tortured with electric shocks all over her body. She quickly and quietly left the courtroom when her testimony was over.

The specific allegations against Scilingo, who denies them, are that he helped push drugged and naked political prisoners out of airplanes and into the sea.

Scilingo admitted as much in dozens of interviews with reporters and in sworn testimony during an earlier phase of the investigation, but has since retracted it, calling it an elaborate lie meant to provoke a wider investigation of the Navy.

Central to the plaintiffs' case, however, is that Scilingo knew about the purported horrors taking place all around him at the Navy Mechanical School—the notorious ESMA—which was used as a detention and torture center during the 1976-83 military rule, which crushed the leftist rebellion.

Guerrillas like the Montoneros or Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) launched strikes against military barracks and targeted officers for assassination. Opponents of the junta say the military response was disproportionate, rounding up suspects without due process of law.

Some 30,000 people went missing, human rights groups say.

"I want him to pay for what he did, but there are so many others still free, enjoying their lives," said Guillermo Libedinsky, brother of Susana Beatriz Libedinsky, who disappeared on March 18, 1976, when a group of armed men burst into their home in the middle of the night and took her away.

Libedinsky, who has lived in Spain for many years, said Argentina was not fully prepared to "assume responsibility" for what happened during the dirty war—but nor was Spain. *Reuters*

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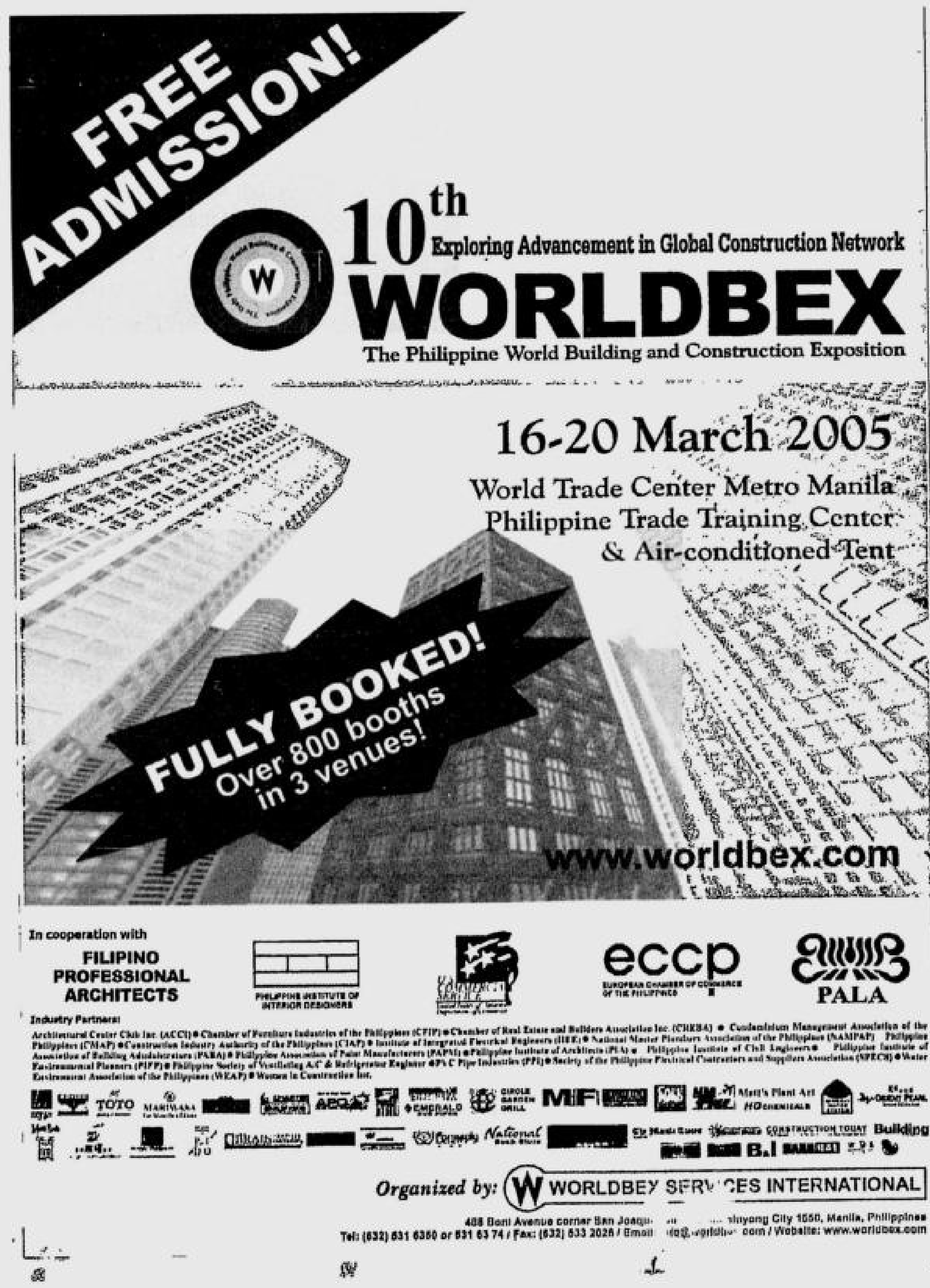

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US faces charges at UN rights meet

GENEVA—The United States, usually a finger-pointer on human rights, could end up in the dock itself over reports of torture and abuse in its war on terror when the United Nations begins a worldwide scrutiny this week.

Activists, such as the New York-based Human Rights Watch, are urging members of the Commission on Human Rights to condemn Washington for mistreatment of prisoners detained abroad.

If any such move emerges during the commission's annual session, which starts on Monday, the United States will be in a similar position to Cuba, Iran and Sudan, countries which Washington and others are likely to seek to pillory.

"If the commission is going to be taken seriously, it needs to be looking at the United States as well as Cuba, China and other serious human rights situations," said Loubna Freih, Geneva representative of Human Rights Watch.

The United States has been strongly criticized over revelations of abuse of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan and allegations of mistreatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

But for many activists and diplomats, it is debatable whether the commission, whose 53 members include many states whose rights' records are questionable, can still be taken seriously.

Sudan, whose government has been accused by a UN-appointed commission of inquiry of "heinous crimes" in its western Darfur region, is a member, as are Zimbabwe and Saudi Arabia, two other countries where critics say abuse is common.

A high level panel of experts probing the workings of the UN, at the request of Secretary General Kofi Annan, concluded its credibility had been eroded because members were more concerned with protecting themselves and their allies than in exposing rights violations.

Launched in 1946, the Geneva-based commission examines nations' adherence to treaties and conventions on issues ranging from illegal killings and arbitrary detention to women's rights, child pornography and the right to food and health. *Reuters*

RICE

No White House plans, says Rice

WASHINGTON— Two months into her job as US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice on Sunday tried to quash speculation that she has her eye on a bigger prize, vigorously insisting she has no intention of running for US president in 2008.

Rice, who has become a darling of the Republican Party since starting her new job in January, told ABC television's "This Week" that she is happy with her assignment as America's ambassador to the world—despite Internet campaigns by "Condistas" eagerly pushing for her candidacy.

"I don't know how many ways to say 'no,' so let me just say it. I don't have any desire to run for president. I don't intend to. I won't do it," she told ABC in one of several TV appearances Sunday.

"I won't. How's that? Is that categorical enough?" she said one day before jetting off on her latest trip, a weeklong tour of Asia that is to include stops in India, China and Japan.

Her disavowals were unlikely however to completely beat back speculation that she might seek to succeed her boss Republican President George W. Bush and make history by becoming both the first African American and first woman to run the White House, given the strength of the "draft Condi" movement.

It is still more than three years until the US presidential election, but the talk is already whether Rice could become the first woman to rule the White House, and whether her Democratic opponent might be US Senator and former First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Several websites and blogs are promoting a White House bid by Rice, including www.americansforrice.com and the website www.Rice2008.com, "dedicated to generating excitement about the possibility of a run for the presidency by Dr. Condoleezza Rice—and persuading her to run!" the website said. *AFP*

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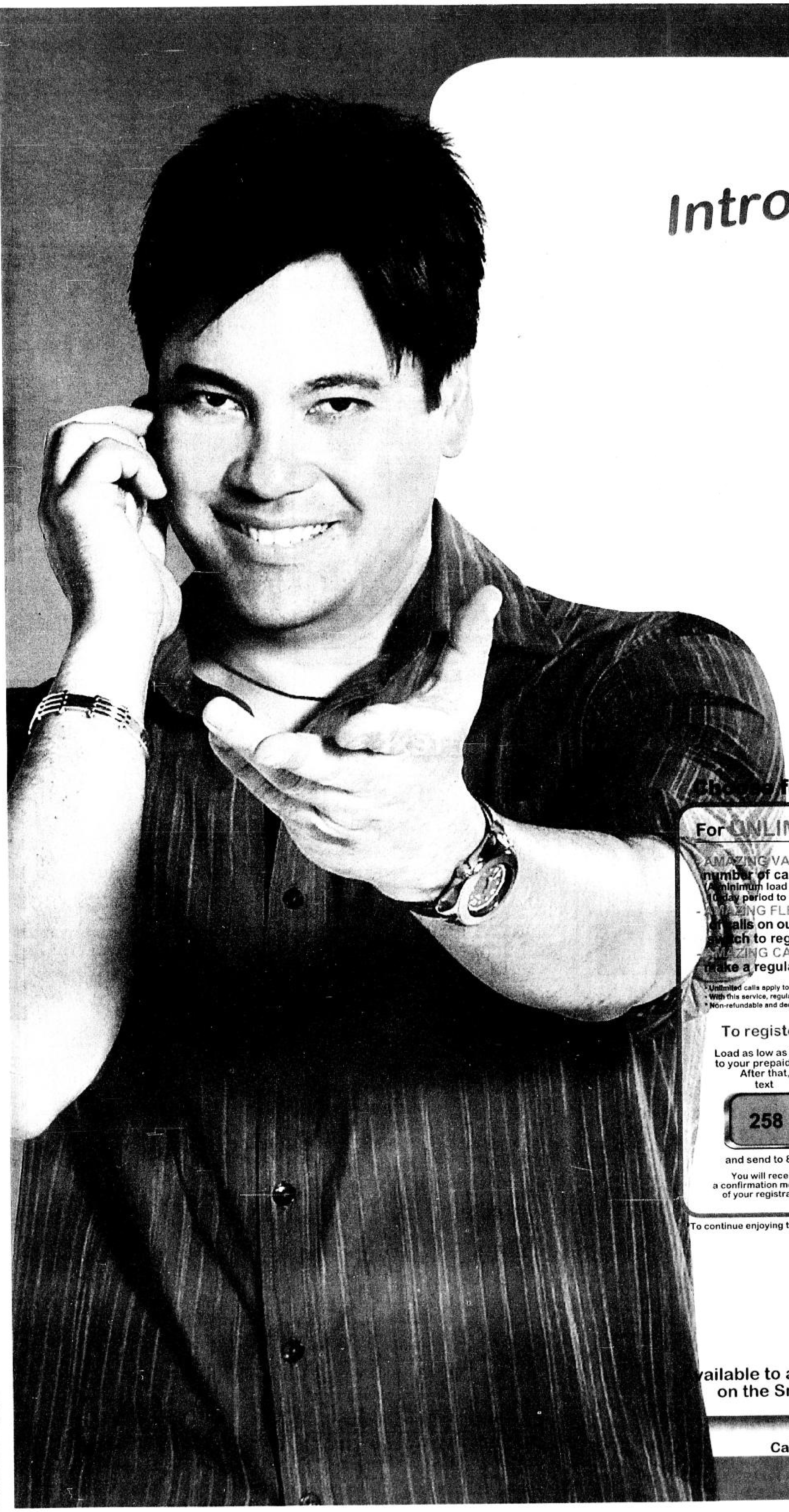

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OPINION

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EDITORIALS

What next?

TAX consumers for the use of raw water? Next they will be taxing people for breathing in air. And then tax people for daily physical activities like eating, drinking, etc.

The National Water Resources Board last week was contemplating charging a fee for the use of raw water to raise revenues to fund water resource development and to force consumers to conserve the scarce resource. The board admitted that its proposal is "socially sensitive" and could be very controversial.

The proposed tax is very socially sensitive because water, next to air, is essential for a person to stay alive. Seventy percent of the human body is composed of water, and one can survive for only three days without water. Make water so costly and you would be practically condemning some very poor people to death.

As it is, water consumers in the cities and other urban areas are already paying for the use of water to water companies. Various taxes and imposts are already included in the final rate charged to consumers. A tax on raw water would again make the water companies raise their rates; they cannot be expected to absorb the new tax themselves.

Under the proposal, even water coming from the ground would be taxed. So artesian wells would be taxed. Deep wells, from which water would be sucked up by electric motors, would be taxed. Conceivably, water scooped from shallow wells dug near water sources like rivers and brooks would also be taxed.

Water for irrigation, which is also raw water, would be taxed. This could raise the prices of rice, which is heavily dependent on water for its cultivation, and other agricultural products.

And what about the rain "that falls from gentle heaven"? Will rain water collected in big catchment basins or small pails be also taxed? That is "raw water" too.

As it is, a big sector of the population, particularly those in the rural areas, does not have sources of clean, potable water. This sector depends on ground water and rivers, brooks and lakes for its household water. And yet it is this sector that will bear a big part of the proposed tax.

Right now, people living below the poverty line manage to survive from day to day by eating rice or gruel (which is rice boiled in a lot of water), salt or *patis* (fish sauce) or *toyo* (soy sauce). They finish their meal with a glass of water since they are too poor to afford soft drinks whose prices have been raised recently. Very soon, even a glass of drinking water may be a luxury for the poor if the proposed tax on raw water is approved.

Who's next?

THE KILLINGS of activists and members of leftist organizations all over the country, and the slayings of pro-worker people in Hacienda Luisita have reached alarming levels, and yet they do not seem to disturb government officials at all.

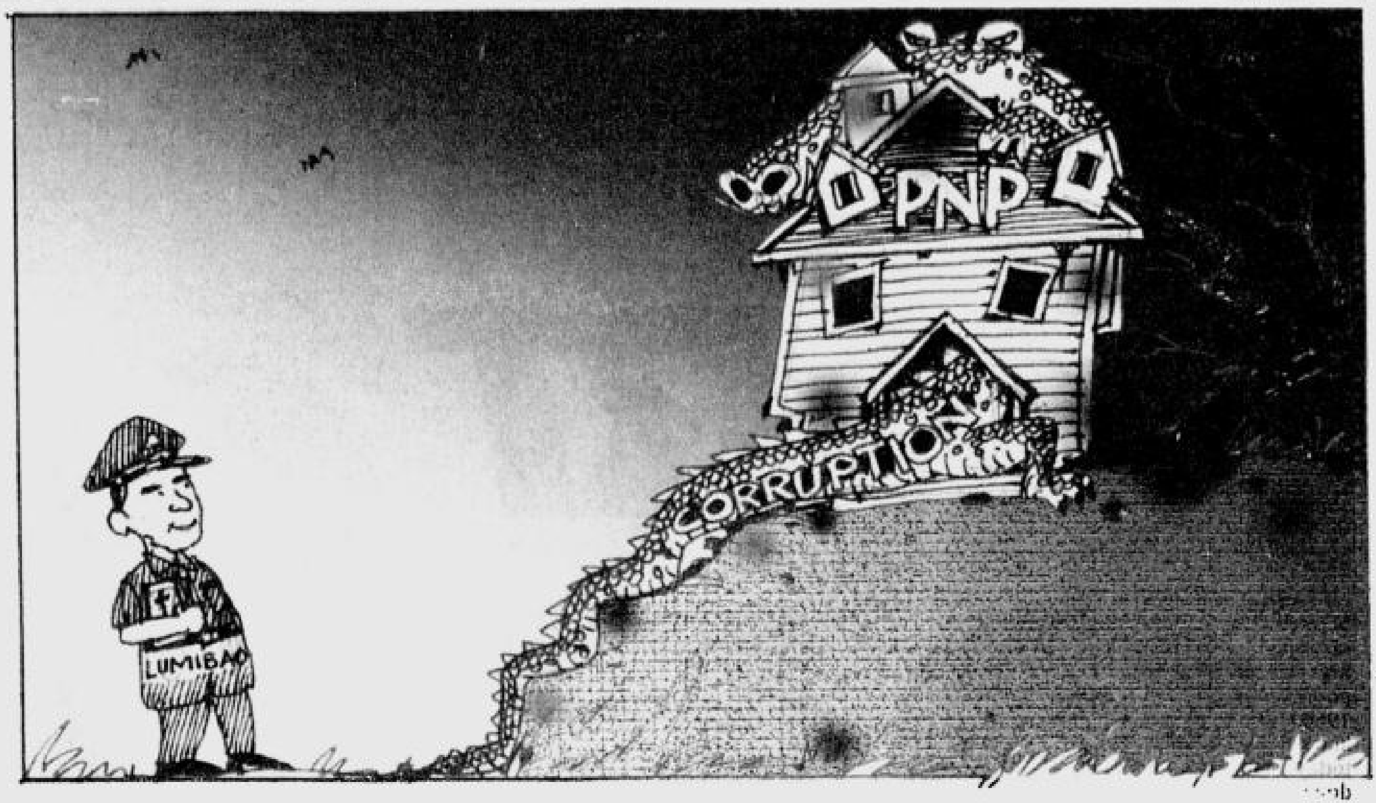
Is it perhaps true, as Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo alleged in a recent privilege speech, that the killings, abductions and disappearances of leftists are acts of terrorism, perpetrated by agents of the state? A total of 11 activists were killed and five were abducted in several provinces in the first quarter of this year.

One of the aims of the framers of the present Constitution in providing for party-list representation in the House of Representatives was to encourage leftist organizations to go above ground and wage a parliamentary and not an armed struggle. But, as Ocampo asked in his privilege speech, "Is the present government determined to illegalize Bayan, Anakpawis and the Gabriela Women's Party? Is it the government's policy to make no distinction between the underground revolutionary movement and the aboveground legal democratic mass movement?"

Will some responsible official please answer his questions?

As for the killings in the troubled Hacienda Luisita, no one in government seems to be alarmed by them. Are they perhaps turning a blind eye on these killings, hoping that the "troublemakers" or those supporting the strikers, would all be eliminated?

The police are going through the motions of investigating the killings and going after suspects. There may be a need to change the police unit assigned to Hacienda Luisita so that a new group can look at the situation with a fresh eye. Meanwhile, the authorities should consider placing Hacienda Luisita under police control, something similar to Comelec control during elections, to prevent further killings.



The President's men—or wimps?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE CLOUT of a "strong republic" is gauged by the compassion it extends to the weakest citizens.

Now, a rookie lady senator is testing President Macapagal-Arroyo's men: Can they apply that humane yardstick in, of all places, "Paradise"?

Some call the place Boracay. For many, it means white beaches, sailing, food, fun, etc.—at devalued peso bargain rates. For tourism honcho Dick Gordon and Secretary "Ace" Durano, the place is a Filipinized Rubaiyat: "Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough, /A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou/ Beside me singing in the Wilderness—/And Wilderness is Paradise enow."

But few know—or care—about the "origs" who gave the island its name. Like Mount Pinatubo Aetas, the Atis were Boracay's original inhabitants, then Kalibo Bishop Gabriel Reyes wrote the President in 2002. "Lacking education," they're often harassed and evicted. "Help them, Ms President."

Boracay's white sand reminded the Atis of *bora* or water bubbles. They spliced that with *"bocay,"* meaning "white." But the name is all the Atis have left.

As in Mindanao, after outsiders ("Bisayas") came, Atis were muscled off the land, the Inquirer Visayas noted. Only then did the Atis realize the "Bisayas had other notions of land ownership."

Exploiting the weak is not a Filipino monopoly. It has occurred in Australia, the United States, Indonesia, among other places.

"In Honduras and the Philippines, indigenous people have been systematically forced into more marginal (lands) which echoes the 'native reserves' of Southern and East Africa," notes the Journal of Agrarian Change. "They're frequently denied social and political rights. And struggles often focus on asserting these."

Today's "reserve" in Boracay is a one-hectare lot in Sitio Bolabog, a 10-minute tricycle ride from the tourist strip. Some 200 or so Atis live there in huts, malnourished, sickly, poorly educated. Although laws, like the Indigenous Peoples' Right Act (RA 8371) offer protection, they're insecure.

More difficult is enforcing the law in a country where "the local political bosses (*caciques*) lord it over the countryside through a complex network of patronage," Saturnino Borras Jr. told the International Conference on Agrarian Reform.

In "Paradise," the rich with political clout have taken to stringing barbed wire to slice the miniscule Bolabog. They've also set deadlines for next week's eviction.

"Your trusted man Nathaniel Sacapano ordered Atis to vacate their abode," Malacañang's fund-strapped National Commission on Indigenous Peoples wrote Rep. Joven Miraflores of Aklan. The "Atis have a pending Certificate of Ancestral Land Title claim over this area," NCIP Chair Reuben Lingating reminded Miraflores, who claims extensive tracts. Until a decision is reached, "their right to stay is guaranteed" by law.

The Boracay parish priest, meanwhile, confronted tax declaration holder Aniceto Yap's workers who were fencing the Ati village. An overnight wall sliced three and a half huts. An accomplished eviction, the priest feared, would outrun the law.

Daughters of Charity nuns, who live among the Atis and serve them, stand up for the embattled Atis. Bishop Jose Romero Lazoto wants the Kalibo church to live the Second Plenary Council's call for "a preferential option for the poor, a church of the poor."

The Church protest was ignored. It's not the first time. "How many divisions has the Pope?" Josef Stalin scoffed in one of history's grossest under-estimations. Can "Paradise's" tourist trade afford front-page photos of nuns, serving the Atis, dragged from their nipa hut convent?

Sans publicity, Sen. Jamby Madrigal bucked Boracay's slice-and-divide tactics. In a polite but blunt letter to the President's men—Secretaries Angelo Reyes, Mike Defensor and Rene Villa, the NCIP chair and other officials—she wrote that the Atis are threatened with eviction by persons who "represent themselves as owners of the land of which said tribe sojourns and are indigenous to." Boracay land is "inalienable" since it is classified as forestlands. (PD 180 also sets aside the island as a tourist zone and marine reserve.) The law "recognizes the superior right of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domain." Their right to stay "shall be inviolate." Neither may they be "relocated without their free and prior informed consent."

Can Madrigal change the odds?

"This is about very poor people fighting the odds," notes Oxfam's Global Land Policy adviser Robin Palmer. "Land is always a deeply political issue, involving highly disputed and often very dangerous terrain." It's happening when the long wave of land reform, kicked off by the French Revolution ended in the 1970s, as globalization surged. "It's a world in which human and labor rights are being put into reverse gear.... And the poor find themselves, in today's global supply chains, in a race to the bottom."

Madrigal's speaking up for those at the bottom was unexpected. Many saw her as a spoiled rich dilettante. Like Jinggoy Estrada, wasn't she out of her depth in the Senate? some people asked. Did we under-rate this lady?

Madrigal insists that a "strong republic" is measured by the compassion it extends to the weakest. Can the President's men match that? Or will they be wimps in the face of a gauntlet tossed by land claimants who built a hut in the Atis' basketball court?

"The measure you mete out to others," the Master from Galilee said, "is the measure that will be meted out to you."

* * *

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Music of the night

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I SAW the movie version of "The Phantom of the Opera" determined to find much good in it. It is one of my favorite musicals, a work of genius from conception to execution. Andrew Lloyd Webber is one of those composers who straddle classical and pop with equal ease, and his works have as much claim to "opera" as Puccini's. In but two decades, he has produced three towering "rock operas," though only the first really has much to do with rock. Those are "Jesus Christ, Superstar," "Evita" and "Phantom." Tim Rice wrote the libretto for "JCS" and "Evita" and Charles Hart for "Phantom."

All have been turned into movies. The first two are not bad, but I still prefer the original stage versions. Certainly, Ian Gillian of Deep Purple is worlds better than Ted Neely. Gillian turned screaming into an art; Neely, well, let us be charitable and say he truly gave an impression of Christ wracked with pain. Madonna gave Patti Lupone a run for her money (an apt metaphor for Evita), but the stage version of the rally at Casa Rosada leading up to "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" is by far the more thrilling and moving. And makes a huge case for why myth often overwhelms deeds in politics.

The critics did not particularly like the movie version of "Phantom," and laid the blame on the lack of charisma of the actors. Alas, there is truth to it. To their credit, the movie actors all have mellifluous voices. Michael Crawford, the original Phantom, has power, but he tends to be throaty in the higher registers, which is a little annoying at the particularly dramatic moments. Gerald Butler has a more fluid voice, but he can't seem to register the same degree of angst. Not consistently anyway: he does so toward the ending, singing his Phantom version of "That's All I Ask of You" with heart-rending ache.

Patrick Wilson, as Christine's young lover Raoul, has a limpid voice, but as a friend of mine texted me, the whole deal seems stacked in favor of the Phantom: What woman would prefer him to the other guy, however disfigured? I was reminded of what a critic said about "First Knight," which had Sean Connery as Arthur and Richard Gere as Lancelot. The movie, he said, strained credulity. What woman in her right mind would prefer Richard Gere to Sean Connery even at Connery's age? Good point: It's not the looks, or the age.

But my own disappointment with the movie has to do not with its acting but with its conception. At the very least, it dispels the sinister aspect of the Phantom, the sense of menace he radiates, alongside his romantic and creative qualities. That is not helped by makeup, which makes the Phantom look like he had just been roughed up by goons after a night of carousing, nothing more. Which are not beyond the curative ministrations of Vicki Bello et al. The original Phantom, essayed by Lon Chaney, which set new standards in Gothic horror in films, had him sporting only a fleshless skull.

It is even less helped by the relative cheerfulness of the Phantom's surroundings. The part where the Phantom leads Christine to his subterranean lodgings, which starts with the menacing strains of the "Phantom" theme and ends with the soaring "Music of the Night" is marred by opulence. If the Phantom had delivered Christine in a gondola to a kingdom by the river, he could not have produced a more "MGM" feel. When the Phantom sings, "Turn your face away/ From the garish light of day," you are hard put to understand what he's talking about. This is garish light of day.

This brings me to the most essential point. Webber's and Hart's "Phantom" is not just a love story, it is a grand love story. What sets "Phantom" apart from Dracula, the other love-starved monster (Butler does a good deal of cape-swirling), and "Beauty and the Beast," which is also about a heroine seeing past ghastly appearance with the eyes of true love, is its exploration of the creative and destructive power of genius, the fascinating and repelling visage of art, the tension between moral convention and artistic license. The Phantom is more than a love-struck fool, he is the epitome of beauty and beastliness. Anyone who has had the creative urge knows the thin line between brilliance and madness. From the start my sympathies have been with the Phantom, not Raoul.

Charles Baudelaire postulated once, not unlike the Phantom, that normality, convention and ordinary life were illusory and that the real, essential, creative world was to be found not in the day but in the night. I don't know if Hart is a fan of the French Symbolists, but compare the lines about the garish light of day with these from Baudelaire's "Meditation": "The sun sinks moribund beneath an arch/ And like a long shroud rustling from the East/ Hark, Love; the gentle Night is on the march." The phrase, "music of the night," is a rich one, reverberating with all sorts of meaning. It suggests that music may truly be found in the night, in the unconscious, in the unfettered self, which is also the wellspring of murder and mayhem.

Christine's dilemma, loudly echoed in the stage version, is also a magnificent one, something that has bedeviled artists since time began. Which is: How much of yourself do you surrender to art? I still remember something a friend of mine told me a long time ago. To succeed in art, he said, you must be ruthless. That was the word he used: "ruthless." You have to turn your back on "normality," or pass "the point of no return," as the Phantom puts it. That is never an easy decision. All of which gave the original "Phantom" such incredible power, emotionally and intellectually, which just isn't there in the movie.

Still, go watch it, if only for the music. If not courtesy of SM, courtesy of Edu Manzano's favorite scourge.

Legislators focusing on the wrong thing

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ONE of the most controversial bills pending in the House of Representatives is HB 3773 or the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Bill. It has gone through committee and is up for plenary debates.

The bill rakes up the old theory that "overpopulation" is the cause of the Philippines' lack of progress and its being the laggard of Asia. The bill authored by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman and two dozen others says that the State "shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive national policy on responsible parenthood, effective population management and sustainable development that values the dignity of every human person and affords full protection to people's rights." It gives the impression that to the legislators, population management is the main answer to RP's lack of development; and conversely that if we encourage our people to limit their families to, say, two children (mainly through artificial means), then things would go well. But it's easy to see that all along blame for the country's lack of development should be laid on those who dictate its economic policies and political direction, including legislators who spend their pork allocations on whimsical and nonsensical projects. But nobody wants to admit that, of course. Instead they turn again to their favorite whipping boy: "overpopulation."

* * *

More than anyone, the legislators know the real score on this issue, but they'd rather play blind. During the recent hearings on HB 3773, officials of the National Statistics Coordinating Board (NSCB) showed that the peak of RP's population growth was in the 1950s and 1960s, when the birth rate was over 3 percent and since then it has been going down, so that today the birth rate stands at 1.9 percent. This downward spiral is also confirmed by the UN Yearbook. But the House committee members refused to believe the NSCB people and called them liars. The legislators preferred to believe their own data which seem to have little basis.

* * *

Perhaps they have to resort to insult because it's obvious to anyone traveling in the provinces that the only "over-population" is in the slums of Metro Manila and a few other urban centers. This is due to the migration of people from the provinces to the metropolis, which, in turn, is largely due to the lack of development and opportunities for gainful employment in the hinterlands. If only the legislators had channeled all their pork barrel into projects that perk up the economy through truly viable industries and infrastructure (instead of enriching themselves and their relatives, as in the case of some), there would have been far less migration to choke our cities.

* * *

Economist Bernardo Villegas has argued this point repeatedly. He notes that the population density of RP is 255 persons per sq km, and the maximum will be 370 people per sq km by 2025. This is a very thin "density," he argues, compared to about 6,000 or 7,000 people per sq km in Singapore or Hong Kong. The island state and the gateway to China have some of the densest populations in the world, yet, they are also among the most progressive economically in Asia. Hence the fault really lies not in the density of population.

Villegas concedes, however, that the National Capital Region is really bursting at the seams, with a population density of 15,000 per sq km. What better indication of what happens when there is a clear dislocation of resources! Villegas argues that the solution is not population "management," but correct economic policies, basic education, farm-to-market roads, post-harvest facilities and other infrastructure improvements.

* * *

The bill's authors doubtless realize that the problem is not "overpopulation" but poor management of resources by those who have ruled this country since time immemorial. By pushing for HB 3773, they're admitting there's nothing they can do to make the management of resource more equitable and prudent. So they resort to laying the ground for the killing of the unborn, which is what those who are pushing vigorously for the propagation of the "contraceptive mentality" are doing.

* * *

Yesterday, I was invited to attend a forum sponsored by Human Life International-Asia where four speakers sought to debunk the House move to "control" population. Sociologist-demographer Rosa Linda Valenzona, former DSWD undersecretary and now general manager of Ayala Assets, made a very interesting graphic presentation, based on statistics, of how the fertility rate directly increases as the infant mortality rate falls with better hygiene, nutrition and medical care. She also showed how the fertility rate is effectively reduced by many factors.

For instance, Valenzona noted that if a woman went through 2.1 years of education, this effectively reduces the number of children she would have by 3.6 percent. She cited other factors, such as the woman's entry into the labor force, which affect the number of children she would have, without the use of artificial means of birth control.

What this means is that development is what brings down the fertility rate. This was what happened in South Korea. In its less affluent days, it had such an alarmingly high birth rate, until the economy began to take off, thanks to its huge business conglomerates and single-minded and aggressive economic policies of government. Then the birth rate went down as couples began to have preoccupations other than sex.

If the Philippines had more enlightened legislators and finance managers, as well as a bureaucracy rid of corruption and a leadership with strong political will, it need not be divided over the population control issue, like what is happening now.

Another lifetime

YOUNG BLOOD

Honey Reyes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHEN I first stepped off the plane in Washington, D.C. back in June 2004, it was another lifetime. Looking back now, I feel that the short span of time since my arrival has changed me in more ways than I can think of.

Beneath that heavily armored exterior, devil-may-care attitude and adventurous streak I exhibited to the world when I arrived at the US capital, I guess I was actually feeling lost, bewildered, a little afraid and perhaps a bit apprehensive about finally going my own way. To begin with, I went to Washington knowing no one. I had no family, no friends. I was completely on my own. If not for my Tita Pearl, the sister-in-law of my mom's friend and sister-in-law of my dad's cousin (whew!) who took me in for two weeks, I would have felt even more lost and bewildered, which is why I will be forever grateful to her.

Being lost forces you to grow up faster than you'd want or intend to. It is a matter of survival. There is the need to find one's niche in unknown territory.

The experience forced me to change. To reflect upon my outlook and the way I interact with the environment and everyone around me.

When I was in graduate school in Los Angeles in 2003, I didn't feel too many changes in my life. I simply went to school and pursued my post-graduate degree. My parents still supported me and I took a part-time job.

Now, I have complete independence. I have my own place (well, I rent my place), I have a good job and therefore I am basically free to live my life the way I please, without anyone telling me what to do with my life.

As I look back, the "me" who stepped off the plane back in June is no longer me. How much have I grown up? Have my priorities in life changed?

Not in the sense that there is a complete transformation. But there are certain experiences, certain trials, certain obstacles which I've done or faced for the first time. Being the brash, reckless and obstinate person I've always been, I ran into them headlong, not caring what the consequences would be and oftentimes ignoring what I felt should be the proper way to deal with them. Hence these myriad of emotions—amusement, indignity, anger, embarrassment and others that I've experienced on account of my own recklessness, bravado or simply wrong decision.

This leads me to ask if during the last few months I have thrown away certain ideals by which I've always lived. Or if I am just living the way I wish to and I have finally stopped unconsciously following what other people expected of me. The challenges I have faced and the decisions I had to make during my first year of complete independence have helped me learn things and made me tougher than what I actually was when I arrived here.

Last December, I flew home for a short vacation—to familiar territory and familiar faces. Almost immediately I was struck by the realization of how much I'd changed and how much my outlook in life had changed. I felt alienated from the once familiar life I had. It was hard to do, but I steeled myself to accept that my life was different now. I had broken free from dependence.

These last few months have been a period of self-discovery. I have my own circle of friends. I now mold my life to my liking. I answer to myself. I no longer resist change but accept the inevitable—a challenge that I welcome with the conviction that I will conquer.

My keychain says, "The more things change, the more things stay insane." When I look at it, I can't help but smile.

Honey Reyes, 25, works as a junior professional associate with the World Bank. She loves Washington, D.C., but hates the snow.

Coming soon: Filipino 'contractors' in Iraq

COMMENTARY

Art Villasanta

IT'S only a matter of time before we see heavily armed Filipino "contractors" in Iraq—if they aren't there already.

But unless some journalist blows the whistle, we'll never know for certain if that grim, Pinoy-looking guard dressed in civvies and toting an automatic rifle is a real Pinoy. He might also be a Colombian, Fijian or an American of Filipino descent.

Mercenaries are back. Only today, they go by the more respectable name of "contractors" who "officially" provide "only" outsourced combat support for a numerically weak US military.

Contractors, however, are involved in combat in Iraq, which is inevitable since the insurgency is a guerrilla war with no front line. Or in US bureaucratese, Iraq is a "non-linear battlefield" (NLB).

Iraq is the largest market for the new "private military companies" (PMCs) that together constitute an industry worth more than $100 billion. Contractors are also in Afghanistan and in South America, particularly Colombia, assisting in the anti-drug war.

The more than 20,000 contractors in Iraq are the second largest armed force in that country after the US military. Most of these contractors are ex-US military men. Special Forces operators, especially those from the US Army and Navy, and the British Special Air Service (SAS) and Special Boat Service (SBS) are in particularly high demand for contract work.

Some of the other contractors known to be in Iraq are Australians, South Africans, Fijians, Colombians (trained by US Special Forces) and Nepalese (Gurkhas).

As a group, contractors have suffered the second highest number of combat casualties next to the US military. An Internet website lists the deaths of some 250 contractors of varied nationalities. In contrast, Britain has less than 100 combat deaths.

Although no figures for the wounded have been announced, some sources estimate this figure at six times the number of dead. Over a thousand casualties for a group whose "official" job is to act as security guards for facilities and offices, and bodyguards for important people.

The four Americans whose gory murders in Fallujah clinched the US decision to storm that city in November 2004 were contractors.

Contractors are mostly employees of PMCs such as Kellog, Brown & Root (KBR), a subsidiary of Halliburton Inc.; Control Risks Group (CRG), which has an office at the Citibank Tower in Makati; MPRI; Custer Battles; Erinys and Blackwater.

There are, as yet, no purely Filipino PMC, but the Philippines does have in abundance the raw material that goes into the making of contractors: trained combat infantry. Many are veterans of guerrilla warfare. It is an advantage not possessed by any other contractor country except Colombia.

The stunning growth of PMCs is in inverse proportion to the progressive weakening of the US Army. With only 1.4 million men and women today as against over two million a decade ago, the US Army is now involved in two simultaneous wars (Afghanistan and Iraq) and is preparing for a third (Iran). A conflict in Korea cannot be ruled out.

The regular US Army and its reserve component, the National Guard, are stretched close to breaking point on the ground as it is. There are no indications that Washington contemplates restoring conscription to significantly increase the combat strength (or "end strength") of its all-volunteer army.

Without this militarily sound but politically suicidal move, however, the US Army is left with no choice but to continue outsourcing its combat-support operations to PMCs to free more men for combat.

These support operations include feeding the troops, equipment maintenance, administrative work and construction. KBR, the largest employer of contractors in Iraq, employs Filipinos in non-combat roles inside fortified military bases.

Should the US Army find itself involved in three or four wars, its reliance on PMCs will inevitably extend beyond combat support into active combat. There simply won't be enough uniformed fighting men to go around.

The butcher's bill in Iraq for the United States comes to more than 10,000 casualties since 2003, most of them combat infantry. These losses will take years to replace. Turning a raw recruit into a proficient combat soldier takes some two years of intense training at huge cost. Producing combat leaders takes longer—up to a decade for battalion commanders.

With conscription a non-option, the only recourse for the US Army is to outsource its "non-mission critical" functions so it can comb out more men and women for its core competency, which is war fighting.

The United States has a huge pool of retired or resigned servicemen already trained in the US way of war. Contractors are being drawn from this pool.

Money draws contractors to Iraq and Afghanistan. Combat contractors are paid lavishly by any standard. Ex-SAS men can receive up to 14,000 British pounds monthly (or about P1.5 million). Even for those at the bottom of the pay scale such as the Fijians, monthly salaries are in the region of $1,000.

But more ominous than their involvement in combat (a fact that goes against current US doctrine) are indications that the United States is leaning toward making contractors an organic component of its future armed forces. And this will profoundly alter the complexion of future wars.

Art Villasanta is a correspondent for telecom magazines based in Hong Kong.

The return

Jason Roy M. Pacheco

IT is rather eerie to come home to an empty house after being away for a couple of weeks on your Christmas vacation. There's no one to meet you at the airport, just a New York taxi driver to bring you home—someone who could have sworn that the Philippines is part of China. No family or friend to meet you at the front door of your apartment and help you lug your suitcases up a flight of stairs. It's just you. No big home cooked feast to celebrate your arrival. Just a surprise present from your closest friend in the city who, while you were gone, has unfortunately left the city to make his way back home in Europe: a case of Dutch beer left on the kitchen counter to help get the year started again.

The strangeness hits you. And it hits you hard. Suddenly, you are faced by a reality that is familiar, but different. You find yourself home, but feeling somewhat detached. Welcome to another year in New York, reputedly the greatest city in the world, ever dynamic, ever alive and ever changing. Setting to easily 10 million movies out there and home to some 10 million people living out the stories of their lives, tragic or otherwise.

The oddness of the situation could leave you somewhat stunned. All of a sudden, what were once everyday rituals like dinners and nights-out with friends are no longer part of your daily routine. Strangers in the streets and subway trains seem to have grown stranger. But surprisingly, people in the office have somewhat become friendlier (at least those who'd survived the big surprise that saw 14 people mostly in your department being retrenched at the start of the year). The changes could somewhat leave you wanting to turn back time to what's familiar, only to realize its impossibility.

Amid all the oddness and occasional bouts with how-it-used-to-be withdrawal symptoms, the newness of the new year slowly seeps in. The old New York that you knew no longer exists. It's time to move on. 'Coz otherwise that New York minute might just fly by without you noticing it. And oftentimes, it does.

An Australian Aboriginal proverb goes, "We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love... and then we return home."

Jason Roy M. Pacheco, 25, is a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University and holds a master's degree from New York University. He works for an ad agency in New York.

San Pablo de los Montes

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

SAN Pablo de los Montes was a *visita* of the town of Bay. The church and convent mentioned by Gaspar de S. Agustin dated back to 1586 and its first prior was Fr. Mateo de Mendoza. Originally it was called Sampaloc because there were so many tamarind trees. There used to be 2,000 tribute payers but these had been scattered to create other towns like Lipa, Rosario, Sto. Tomas and others. For this reason the riches of the land and areas of Pangjayaan, Manintja, Galanuu, Patacpaquin, Bitin-Olila and Cococ became part of other towns and Batangas province.

The leader or headman of the town of Sampaloc was the old man, Gatpag-il which means Don Pag-il. The *casique* Gatpulintan reigned in the sitios of Bulaquin up to Masalocot and from the river of Labasin to Panghaya-an, which today belongs to Batangas and at the time was at war with its neighbors (Andres de Castro, an 18th century traveler, thought the enmity would last forever).

Gatsungayan had the reputation of being very arrogant and was a great hunter of deer and wild boars. He reigned from Macopa to Galamus. From Lomot and Palagpaquin, Bitin Olila to Cococ (which in 1790 belonged to Sto. Tomas) the *casique* Gatsalacab ruled by virtue of war and conquest.

These men were *mestizo* Borneans and had Aeta blood. They called this mixture Dayhagang. None of them wanted to surrender to the king or to be converted, and thus their descendents did not enjoy the privileges of the Lakandulas.

The oldest inhabitants of the area were the Aetas, who were collecting tribute until Gabriel Montoya, a soldier of Legaspi, conquered the towns and installed an Augustinian friar as minister.

The first governor was D. Bartolome Maghayu; the second, D. Cristobal Somangalit; and the third, D. Bernabe Pindan—all Christians who helped the friars in the labors of conversion.

D. Maghayu had the River Palacpaquin with its wealth of shrimps. He was a close relative of the *casique* D. Agustin Madlansangan, lord and founder of the ancient town of Bay some four leagues from San Pablo and of his sister Ladia Señora, founder of the town of Calilaya which later on was given to Tayabas where it had since developed and was under the *alcalde mayor* D. Francisco de S. Juan, a native of the town.

San Pablo is located in a high, joyful and healthy place on the skirts of Mount San Cristobal and another called Banaojao or of Tayabas, both of which very high and from where more than 14 waterfalls descended. The waters were sweet and irrigated their fields and some passed through the town and the sacristy.

The reason the name San Cristobal was given to Mount Batoganuan was that the Augustinian friars found a gigantic idol that looked like the martyred St. Christopher and despite the fact that it was carved of stone, they ordered it destroyed (alas and alack) so that the natives would not continue to worship it.

San Pablo whose antiquity and past grandeur were recognized by her neighbors had ceded land to Bay, Pila and Nagcarlan. It only had 1,500 tributes and some 7,000 inhabitants. Between the two mountains lived many Aetas who maintained themselves with the gold dust they got from the placers and from the lumber they sold to the Tagalogs.

The soil of this town was strong and thick with a mixture of clay. It was muddy during the rainy season, with many mud holes and ravines that were difficult to traverse during the cold months. On the southeast was another mountain range called Malaraya, longer but not so tall, where wax, honey, lumber and game were gathered. There was in its convent a large crucifix with the Latin inscription brought by a discalced Franciscan friar.

The mountain cracked during the earthquake of 1771 and could be called, like the one in Cataluña, the Monserrat of the Philippines. And if mountains so firm can split open, what more buildings? (For those interested in research, De Castro states that Fr. Lorenzo de Sta. Maria wrote a narrative of the many marvels he saw in his journeys through the two mountains but he was unable to find the document and even those who told him about it had merely heard about it from their grandparents.)

What De Castro did see was a map of the area made by Fr. Antonio de San Prospero, a parish priest for many years, showing the mountains, rivers, lagoons, landmarks, terminals and jurisdictions of San Pablo or Sampaloc. In the archives of Lipa, De Castro also saw various papers written in ancient Tagalog script pertaining to lawsuits concerning land and boundaries with rivers and houses between two towns. There were also last wills in the native language and script naming the church as the heir to lands and jewelry.

Because of this inheritance, the church of San Pablo had a ranch of 3,000 head of cattle in Lumbangan which bandits and highwaymen stole. Worse, many of the documents had already disappeared and only the testimony of the old inhabitants was left.

The church also owned an orchard behind the sacristy with 3,000 sq. ft. of cacao and other fruit trees. An arroyo of water passed through its middle to irrigate it.

The natives had many and very good orchards, but they lived far from the town because they loved their independence and liberty so that even in 1790 it had not been possible to re-settle them no matter how hard the *alcalde mayor* of Taal or Comintan (its other name) tried. Every year, they moved to make new fields of rice and wheat.

* * *

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

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Premature insistence

THIS is in response to the letter of Procopio Beltran, titled "Suspension or dismissal of corrupt officials is not enough." (PDI, 3/2/05)

In accusing the Office of the Ombudsman of nonfeasance, Beltran cited the cases of Deputy Customs Commissioner Reynaldo Nicolas and Customs Operation Officer Manuel Valencia.

There are currently three cases pending against Nicolas: an administrative complaint for grave misconduct and/or oppression; a criminal complaint for falsification; and a case for forfeiture of ill-gotten wealth. All three cases are still undergoing preliminary investigation and/or administrative adjudication with this office.

Nicolas has been placed under preventive suspension. A preventive suspension is not a penalty; it is usually imposed at the start of the proceedings in order to protect the sanctity of evidence and not prejudice the just, fair and independent disposition of a case.

When Nicolas was suspended, the administrative case had yet to be resolved. Under the law, before the final disposition of the administrative case, a respondent must be given the chance to file his counter-affidavit and produce countervailing evidence. If the records show there is substantial evidence against the respondent, he is penalized with dismissal from the service. Nicolas' administrative case is still to be resolved.

Beltran asked why the Ombudsman has not attached, as a preliminary course of action, the alleged ill-gotten wealth of respondent Nicolas, as provided for by RA 6770. Attachment is possible only after the filing of a petition for forfeiture before the appropriate courts as mandated under RA 1379. And, before such a petition may be filed, the law requires that an inquiry similar to a preliminary investigation in criminal cases must be conducted. As already mentioned, the case for forfeiture against Nicolas is currently under preliminary investigation. Only upon the conclusion of this investigation and, upon finding of sufficient cause, can a petition for forfeiture against a respondent be filed with the Sandiganbayan. Beltran's insistence on attachment at this stage is therefore premature.

As for Valencia, there are two cases pending against him: an administrative case for dishonesty; and a case for forfeiture of ill-gotten wealth. The administrative case against him had already been resolved, for which he was found guilty and dismissed from service. As for the case for forfeiture, it has already undergone the required preliminary investigation, but it has yet to be resolved. Similarly, it would be premature to speak of attachment at this stage.

Incidentally, the Tanodbayan has already directed our Preliminary Investigation Administrative Adjudication and Monitoring Office to resolve the Nicolas and Valencia cases expeditiously.

—ERNESTO M. NOCOS,
assistant ombudsman,
Office of the Ombudsman,
Agham Road, North Triangle,
Diliman, Quezon City

Perfume ingredients not harmful

WE were extremely concerned to read the news item, "Peril behind sweet smell," (PDI, 2/15/05) which might have grossly misled readers because of the ill-informed and irresponsible claims of Greenpeace.

The so-called "study," on which Greenpeace based its report, simply confirmed the presence of some chemical substances in perfumes. In its report, Greenpeace hinted that the levels of these chemical substances in perfumes are potentially harmful. This is absolutely not the case.

Moreover, the Greenpeace report omitted very important information in its attempt to frighten consumers through what can only be described as deception. Tables are presented without reference to what the amounts actually are. You have to look at the original study document to see that they are actually parts per million—which, in some cases, are so small that it was only recently that they became analytically measurable.

The main phthalate that was detected in the perfumes tested was Diethyl phthalate (DEP) in quantities of up to 2.2 percent. This is not at all surprising as DEP has twice been declared as safe for such use by the European Union's highest scientific body, the Scientific Committee for Cosmetic Products. (Please see http://www.dep-facts.com)

DEP is commonly added to perfume in order to make the scent linger longer. It is not classified as a hazardous substance. It is true that DEP can be absorbed via the skin. But even if one could physically manage to use (and afford!) 2.5 liters of perfume containing 2.2 percent of DEP per day, every day, and be able to absorb all the DEP, he would still not reach a level of exposure at which even rodents would remain unaffected.

Furthermore, the claims by Greenpeace that phthalates intensify once they enter the body or that they build up inside us, is also ill-informed. All phthalates rapidly metabolize and are naturally and quickly excreted by our bodies.

The other phthalates detected were found in such small amounts as to similarly pose no risk. In most cases, their presence was traced to contamination from equipment used in the manufacturing process.

It is a great shame that an organization which has done a great deal to protect our environment in the past is now putting its entire credibility on the line by peddling wrong information. We would be delighted to provide the Bureau of Food and Drugs with copies of what Greenpeace considers as a great wealth of scientific evidence should it decide to look into this concern.

—TIM EDGAR,
deputy director,
European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates,
Plastic Additives Group,
Specialty Chemicals Programme,
The European Chemical Industry Council, Av E van Nieuwenhuyse 4 (Box 2), B-1160 Brussels, Belgium

Students need VAT increase

ANY decision made on the proposed VAT increase will deeply affect the quality of education of our 18 million students and 450,000 teachers all over the country.

With the present education budget, our per-student allocation is one of the lowest in the region and leaves us with huge shortages in the number of teachers, textbooks, chairs and desks.

Would that our lawmakers bear in mind the significant impact of their decision (on the VAT increase proposal) on the future of our schoolchildren.

—FLORENCIO B. ABAD,
secretary,
Department of Education,
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

'Go-go style' in gov't

THIS is in reaction to the letter titled "Wet flag violates rights of pedestrians." (PDI, 2/11/05) At the end of his letter, the writer wrote, and I quote, "I fully understand the gravity of the problem and the need to curb it."

If he really understands the problem, how come he did not offer or suggest an intelligent solution to it?

If only the letter-writer would take a closer look around, he would find out that the combined accomplishments of previous MMDA governors and chairpersons cannot equal Bayani Fernando's. The go-go style of Fernando is what we need in the government if we want our country to be great again.

—OBI M. VILLANUEVA,
Noveleta, Cavite

Judge within her authority

RAMON Tulfo's column, "Judge trying a case already dropped" (PDI, 3/3/05) was misleading. The case he was referring to has not been dropped yet.

I can gather from Tulfo's column that after the preliminary investigation of a complaint for theft against the two respondent Australians, probable cause was found; hence, an information was filed in court against them.

Upon a motion for reconsideration, the Caloocan City Prosecution Office reconsidered its earlier finding of probable cause and filed in court a motion to withdraw the information. The court denied the motion, and ordered the prosecution to proceed with the case. Thus, in law and procedure, the case was never dropped.

Tulfo believes that the judge has "no right to hold the case for trial when the government—represented by the prosecutors—doesn't see any reason to prosecute the respondent Australians." Tulfo then continued with a scathing side remark "*Bakit ka ba masyadong atat na atat na hawakan ang kaso* (Why are you so hot in handling the case)?"

Tulfo and his readers should know that the judge acted well within her authority, meaning, she has every right to deny the public prosecutor's motion to withdraw the information if she finds no sufficient legal/factual basis to allow the withdrawal. The Supreme Court, in a host of cases, has repeatedly and consistently recognized this power of the court or judge in cases like this. There is, therefore, nothing wrong or irregular in the judge's denial of the public prosecutor's motion to withdraw the information.

Tulfo wondered "what the Supreme Court can say about this." Well, sir, there is jurisprudence to answer your query. I wish Tulfo had consulted his lawyer-friends before unleashing his vitriolic remarks against the judge. An unfounded and misleading criticism against our judiciary only serves to erode public trust in our legal system.

—REX G. RICO,
Rico & Associates,
4/F Cattleya Condominium,
235 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village,
Makati City

AQUINO
LAUREL

PEOPLE POWER: High hopes in 1986, a big disappointment 19 years after. "BAYAN KO! IMAGES OF THE PHILIPPINE REVOLT"

More questions about Edsa I

IN HER Feb. 24 column, Belinda Olivares-Cunanan asked: "Would the ouster of Marcos have happened without the RAM revolt?"

As an eyewitness to and participant in many significant events prior to Edsa I, the more relevant questions to me are:

First, would Edsa I have happened had the late Salvador "Doy" Laurel not given way to Cory Aquino in the 1986 snap elections? The answer is definitely "No" because with Laurel and Aquino running for the presidency against Marcos, the vote of the opposition would have been divided, and even without massive cheating, Marcos' victory would have been assured.

Second, would thousands of people have attended the opposition-led and -sponsored rallies that culminated in Edsa I had Laurel not led the first public rally on Ayala Avenue in Makati on Sept. 16, 1983. The day before, he had resigned immediately following his resignation from the interim National Assembly to show his outrage over the assassination of his bosom friend, Ninoy Aquino, and in protest over the refusal of his colleagues in that body to allow him to deliver a eulogy for Ninoy, where he would have read in full the statement that Ninoy had prepared to deliver upon his arrival on Aug. 21, 1983. That rally triggered a series of rallies in Ayala Avenue every Friday afternoon, which the press later on dubbed as the "yellow confetti revolution" and which eventually spread throughout the Philippines.

According to Cunanan, Cory Aquino was at the corner of Edsa and Ortigas Avenue around 4:30 p.m. of Feb. 24, 1983. I scanned my old, dusty and yellowing files of newspapers from Feb. 25-28, 1983. There was no mention whatsoever of Cory being there on the date and at the time mentioned by Cunanan. It may be recalled that there were hundreds of media men, both local and foreign, at Edsa that time and certainly Cory's presence there, even for a fleeting moment, would not have escaped their attention.

Cory's oath-taking was originally scheduled in the evening of Feb. 24, 1983, not the following day as claimed by Cunanan. It was, however, cancelled allegedly because an elite Scout Ranger team had been sent to attack Club Filipino should the oath-taking proceed. I recall that when then Cory spokesman Rene Saguisag arrived at Club Filipino to announce that the scheduled oath-taking would not take place, then Assemblyman Homobono Adaza pressed Saguisag for the real reason and Saguisag's answer was: "Honestly, I do not know. I am only a spokesman, I am not even allowed to think."

I was a witness to the above incident because the late Vice President Laurel had assigned his nephew, then Batangas Gov. Joey Laurel and I, together with the governor's security men, to secure what is now the Kalayaan Hall of Club Filipino. We were there since 3 p.m. of Feb. 24, 1983 and left only after Saguisag's announcement. We returned at 6 a.m. the next day and went home only after Cory and Doy had been sworn to office.

—JOSE A. OLIVEROS,
52 Kamagong St.,
Pilar Village, Las Piñas City

It's still Mapua

"WHAT'S in a name change? Mapuans seek investigation" (PDI, 3/4/05)

The management of the Mapua Institute of Technology wishes to reiterate that as the school gears for a "university" status, there will be programmed changes in its organizational structure. And on top of its standard fields of study in engineering, more courses will be offered in line with its expansion program.

Under this program, Mapua Institute of Technology shall be the name of the university's College of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology. This shall be alongside other colleges such as San Lorenzo Ruiz College of Health Sciences, E.T. Yuchengco College of Business and Management, and a few others which will be named in the near future.

All these colleges shall be under one university, which will be called Malayan University—a name that we believe perfectly reflects the school's thrust to achieve interdisciplinary excellence and international recognition.

To ensure continuity, all currently enrolled students, as well as incoming freshmen, will be receiving diplomas and transcripts of records under the name Mapua Institute of Technology.

We wish to point out that these changes do not, in any way, serve a purpose other than what it was intended for—that is, to complement the school's vision of becoming a university of international stature. Thus, to say that the name change was meant "to escape tax liabilities" as reported in the above article, is totally baseless. Furthermore, to say that a mere name change can enable one "to escape tax liabilities" boggles the mind.

When the Yuchengco group took over the reins of Mapua some five years ago, it had envisioned the school to become an international center of excellence.

Above all, we wish to assure the students and parents that the name Mapua, which has been synonymous to quality engineering education, shall be preserved and strengthened.

—LUIS H. DADO,
vice president, Legal and HRD,
Mapua Institute of Technology

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Do you agree with the lifting of the country's total log ban in Davao, Caraga and Zamboanga to meet the country's local wood requirements?

i won't agree with it bcoz it only benefits d pocket of illegal loggers. When wud they stop logging? When d tragedy dat happened before, will happen again?
—Abella Marlito, *cebu*

Selective log ban is mOre appropriate in th0se areas. Total log ban would result 2 abuse of logging operatiOns.
—LEILANI B. GONZALES, *Polangui, Albay*

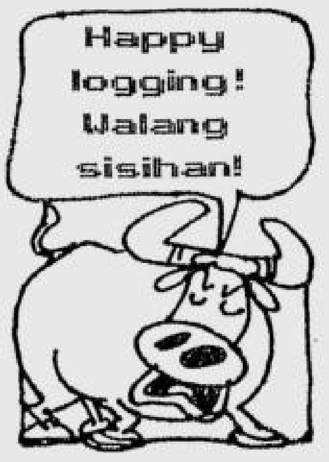
We should save our forests. We should encourage tree farming to meet our lumber needs.
—Rizalde Cabrera, *Olongapo City*

if its f0r d good 0f 0ur c0untry...den why NOT?...
—MARIA AIREEN A. Tapia, *Agusan del Norte*

no, we may be able 2 meet d local requirements of wood 4 now but how about in d future? We don't have unlimited resources
—billy joel yu, *baguio city*

kung sa gobyrenong kurap gaya ni gma, WAG NA! Palusot lang yan para patuloy na kalbuhin ang bundok.
—Eduardo Cacayuran, *Rosario, Cavite*

Let's encourage tree plantations for faster growing trees. Let's preserve our virgin forests to preserve our eco-balance, avoid flashfloods, and for the future generations of Filipinos.
—K. Marte, *QC*


Happy
logging!
Walang
sisihan!

no. once d ban is lifted in those areas, illegal loggers will take d opportunity 2 rape what is left among our virgin forests...
—sheila lachica, *pasig city*

In my own point of view, as we already experienced just recently in Quezon province in which thousands of our innocent brethren lost their lives, this is the result of destroying our forest ecosystem through illegal logging, and slash and burn cultivation.
Therefore, I am not in favor of the lifting of the log ban.
—Arthur L. Dofeliz, *Malaybalay City*

Should the media be barred from interviewing terrorist or rebel groups like the NPA, Abu Sayyaf and MNLF renegades?

NO. These groups are also part of our society. There is nothing wrong with media interviewing these groups.
—ryan mangusan, *baguio*

definitely yes. dat will stop the terrorist in airing their nonsense, mindless and arrogant acts.
—Jigger Solis, *San Fabian*

Interview lang, cgue! But 2 air on tv is?...
—d.dumanat, *agusan*

Media should not be gagged because it would send a wrong signal that the AFP is losing d propaganda war.
—Cesar Marinius M. Reyes, *Agusan del Norte*

not really that barred, only that they should refrain from doing that and be selective on their subjects...
—dan ballener, *iloilo*

Baka 20% LaNG ng MEDIA ay responsible. 80% BULOK or 4SALE. Kung ikaw ay NPA atbp. Saan klaseng MEDIA ka pa-interview? Go figure.
—rene locsin, *QC*

No. mass media have proven 2 be an effective forum 4 their valid social issues. Let d pipol judge how valid the issues are.
—Rizalde Cabrera, *Olongapo City*

Motoring

Where are the economy cars? You should make a showcase of cars 1500cc below. World has a fuel crisis and d Phils shud save every drop.
—renelle magahis, *qc*

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Global Coordinator, Bookrunner and International Lead Manager

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SM Investments Corporation

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Offer Period for Underwriters and Local Small Investors*
11 to 17 March 2005

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SM Investments Corporation

APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBE/PURCHASE
Offer of Common Shares with Par Value of P10.00 per share

This Application Form, to be completed in four (4) copies, together with a duly executed signature card, the appropriate check payment, and all required attachments must be received by the Domestic Underwriters or Selling Agents not later than 12:00 noon, Manila Time, on March 17, 2005.

Applications received thereafter or without the attachments specified below will be rejected. This Application is irrevocable and once received, may not be withdrawn by the Applicant. SM Investments Corporation (the "Issuer" or "SMIC"), by itself or through BDO Capital & Investment Corporation (the Domestic Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter; "BDO Capital"), reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, this Application. Applications improperly or incompletely accomplished may be rejected. In case of over-subscription, the Issuer, by itself or through BDO Capital, reserves the right to allocate the Offer Shares available to Applicants in the manner it deems appropriate.

An Application, once accepted, shall constitute a subscription/purchase agreement between the Issuer/the Selling Shareholders and the Applicant for the subscription to/purchase of the Offer Shares at the time, in the manner, and subject to (a) the conditions set forth herein; (b) the Issuer's/Selling Shareholders' receipt of the appropriate funds from the Applicant; and (c) the successful listing of the Shares on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Capitalized terms used herein shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the Prospectus filed by the Issuer, together with its entire Registration Statement, with the Securities and Exchange Commission on February 1, 2005, as may be amended or supplemented.

APPLICATION

I/We apply to subscribe/purchase SM Investments Corporation Offer Shares under the terms and conditions stated herein and in the Prospectus for the Offer, as follows:

NUMBER OF OFFER SHARES	OFFER PRICE PER OFFER SHARE (IN PESOS)	TOTAL OFFER PRICE (IN PESOS)
	P 250.00	P

Applications must be for a minimum of 10 Offer Shares, and thereafter, in multiples of 10 Offer Shares.

PDTC LODGEMENT/DELIVERY OF STOCK CERTIFICATES

The Applicant shall indicate a choice of either (a) lodging the Offer Shares with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. ("PDTC") or (b) requesting the issuance of a stock certificate evidencing the Applicant's ownership of such Offer Shares. Should the Applicant choose to lodge the Offer Shares with PDTC, the Applicant must provide the additional information required for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares. The Offer Shares will be lodged by the Issuer and the Selling Shareholders with the PDTC within two (2) trading days prior to the Listing Date. Stock certificates to be issued to the Applicant (if so requested) shall be made available by the Stock and Transfer Agent for pick-up by the requesting Applicant from three (3) trading days after the Listing Date. Stock certificates that remain unclaimed for a period of 30 days from the Listing Date shall be dispatched by mail, at the risk of the Applicant, to the address specified herein.

THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO INDICATE HIS CHOICE BELOW. THE APPLICANT'S FAILURE TO INDICATE HIS CHOICE BELOW, OR THE PROVISION OF INCOMPLETE OR FALSE INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO THE APPLICANT'S CHOICE AS REQUIRED HEREIN, MAY LEAD TO THE AUTOMATIC ISSUANCE OF STOCK CERTIFICATES, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS DESCRIBED BELOW, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE ISSUER'S RIGHT TO REJECT OR SCALE-DOWN SUCH APPLICATION.

☐ PDTC-Lodged*
☐ Certificated

* Additional information required for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares (to be completed with the assistance of the PDTC Participant appointed by the Applicant)	We confirm that we are a PDTC Participant and that the Applicant named in this Application is our bona fide client.
PDTC Participant Firm, PDTC Participant Code, PDTC Sub-Account Code	Authorized Signature(s) and Stamp of PDTC Participant

PAYMENT

The Offer Shares must be paid for through a personal or corporate check, manager's check or a cashier's check drawn against a bank account with a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas-authorized agent bank or any branch thereof, located in Metro Manila. Checks should be dated as of the date of submission of the Application, made payable to "SMIC Public Offer", and crossed "Payee's Account Only".

TYPE OF CHECK	DRAWEE BANK/BRANCH	CHECK NO.	AMOUNT
☐ Personal ☐ Corporate ☐ Manager's/Cashier's			

REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES

I/We represent and warrant that all information contained herein and the attached documents are true and correct. I/We warrant having read and understood and relied solely upon the provisions of the Prospectus and the terms and conditions stated within this Application, and unconditionally accept said terms and conditions. I/We understand that no person has been authorized to give information or to make any representation with respect to the Offer Shares other than those specified in the Prospectus. I/we further represent that I am not/we are not a "U.S. Person"* within the meaning of Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

NAME OF APPLICANT (IN PRINT)	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT	DATE

ADDRESS	NATIONALITY	TELEPHONE NUMBER/S	TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(Applicants should not fill in this section)

To be completed by the Trading Participant/Underwriter/Receiving Bank	To be completed by the Stock and Transfer Agent
Application received: By:__________ Date/Time: __________ Name of Trading Participant/Underwriter & Authorized Signatory	Application received: Total Number of Offer Shares: __________ By: __________ Date: __________

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THIS APPLICATION

☐ A duly executed signature card in the form attached to this Application;
☐ A certified true copy of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Applicant;
☐ A certified true copy of the SEC Certificate of Registration of the Applicant; and
☐ A duly notarized certificate of the Applicant's corporate secretary that sets out (a) the resolutions of the Applicant's Board of Directors or equivalent body authorizing the subscription to the Offer Shares subject of the Application and designating signatories for the purpose; and (b) percentage holdings by Philippine nationals in the Applicant.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE SALE/PURCHASE OF OFFER SHARES IN SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION

The information supplied below are merely excerpts taken from the Prospectus filed by the Issuer, together with its entire Registration Statement, with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") on February 1, 2005, as amended or supplemented. For a complete description of the Terms of the Offer, the Applicant is advised to refer to the section entitled "Terms of the Offer" in the Prospectus.

1. **The Offer** – The Offer comprises an offer of a minimum of 75,000,000 and a maximum of 140,000,000 Shares of common stock of the Issuer of par value P10 per Share. The Offer Shares will comprise new Shares offered by SMIC and may include existing Shares offered by certain members of the Sy Family (the "Selling Shareholders"). Approximately 35% of the total Offer Shares are initially being offered in the Philippines pursuant to an initial public offering by the Domestic Underwriters, subject to reallocation.

2. **Eligible Investor** – The Domestic Offer is only open to Philippine investors. "Philippine Investor" means:
   (a) A citizen of the Philippines who is at least 18 years of age;
   (b) Any person who is not a citizen of the Philippines, but is a permanent resident of the Philippines;
   (c) Any corporation, association or fund that is a Philippine resident or organized under the laws of, the Philippines; and
   (d) Trading Participants of the PSE.

3. **Offer Price** – The Offer Price is P230 to P300 per Offer Share. The final Offer Price shall be determined on March 10, 2005 and shall be announced immediately thereafter.

4. **Minimum Subscription** - Applications to subscribe to the Offer Shares must be for a minimum of 10 Shares, and thereafter in multiples of 10 Shares.

5. **Offer Period** – The Offer Period shall commence at 9:30 a.m., Manila Time, on March 11, 2005 and closes at 12:00 noon, Manila time, on March 17, 2005. The Issuer and BDO Capital & Investments Corporation ("BDO Capital", the Domestic Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter) hereby reserve the right to extend or terminate the Offer Period at any time.

6. **Application and Acceptance** – Applications and signature cards may be obtained from the Underwriters or the Selling Agents. A duly and fully accomplished Application in four (4) copies together with a) duly executed signature card, the appropriate check payment, and required documents must be received by the Underwriters or Selling Agents on or before close of the Offer Period.

   The Issuer, through BDO Capital, reserves the right to reject any application or scale down or re-allocate any of the Offer Shares applied for. An Application, once accepted, shall constitute a subscription/purchase agreement between the Issuer/the Selling Shareholders and the Applicant for the subscription to/purchase of the Offer Shares at the time, in the manner, and subject to (a) the conditions set forth herein; (b) the Issuer's/Selling Shareholders' receipt of the appropriate funds from the Applicant; and (c) the successful listing of the Shares on the Philippine Stock Exchange ("PSE").

7. **Payment** – The Offer Price shall be paid in full in Philippine currency upon the submission of a duly executed Application, signature card, and other required documents. Applicants shall pay for Offer Shares through a personal or corporate check, manager's check or a cashier's check drawn against a bank account with a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas ("BSP")-authorized agent bank or any branch thereof, located in Metro Manila. Checks should be dated as of the date of submission of the Application, made payable to "SMIC Public Offer", and crossed "Payee's Account Only".

8. **Documentary Stamp Taxes** – The documentary stamp tax due on the original issuance of the Offer Shares shall be for the account of the Issuer.

9. **Refunds** – In the event this Application is rejected or the number of shares applied for is scaled down, or the Offer is cancelled, the corresponding amount paid by the Applicant shall be refunded, without interest, through a check payable to the Applicant (or in case of joint Applicants to the first named Applicant) and crossed "Payee's Account Only" and mailed or delivered, at the risk of the Applicant, to the address specified by the Applicant in the Application within 5 Banking Days after the close of the Offer Period.

10. **PDTC Lodgement** – The Applicant shall indicate a choice of either (a) lodging the Offer Shares with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. ("PDTC") or (b) requesting the issuance of a stock certificate evidencing the Applicant's ownership of such Offer Shares. Should the Applicant choose to lodge the Offer Shares with PDTC, the Applicant must provide the additional information required for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares. The Offer Shares will be lodged by the Issuer and the Selling Shareholders with the PDTC within two trading days prior to the Listing Date.

11. **Issuance and Delivery of Stock Certificates** - Stock certificates to be issued to the Applicant (if so requested) shall be made available by the Stock and Transfer Agent for pick-up by the requesting Applicant from three trading days after the Listing Date. Stock certificates that remain unclaimed for a period of 30 days from the Listing Date shall be dispatched by mail, at the risk of the Applicant, to the address specified herein.

12. **Registration of Foreign Investments** – None of the Issuer, the Underwriters, and the Selling Agents undertakes to register any foreign investment with respect to the Offer Shares with the BSP. It shall be the obligation of any foreign investor to register his/its foreign investment with the BSP to allow such shareholder to source foreign currency from the Philippine banking system for the repatriation of capital and remittance of dividends pertaining to the Offer Shares.

13. **Representation and Warranty of Foreign Investors** – Applicants who are not Philippine citizens or which are corporations that are not Philippine nationals represent and warrant that their investment in the Offer Shares being applied for will not violate the rules of their respective jurisdictions, and that acquiring and investing in the Offer Shares are permitted in such jurisdictions. The Offer Shares have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and may not be offered or sold within the United States or to, or for the account or benefit of, "U.S. Persons" (as defined in Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended).

14. **Restriction on Issuance and Disposal of Shares** – The Issuer and the Sy Family have agreed not to offer, sell or otherwise dispose of, directly or indirectly, any securities of the same class as the Offer Shares or any of the Issuer's securities convertible or exchangeable for the Issuer's securities of the same class as the Offer Shares, or announce any of the foregoing, within a period of 180 days following the Pricing Date without the written consent of the Underwriters. Furthermore, pursuant to the PSE Revised Listing Rules, the Sy Family has agreed not to offer, sell or otherwise dispose of, directly or indirectly, the 25,000,0000 Shares acquired by them pursuant to the Issuer's most recent increase in authorized capital stock (which was approved by the SEC on 24 January 2005), within a period of 365 days following such acquisition.

15. **Timetable**
   - Pricing of the Offer Shares ("Pricing Date") - 10 March 2005
   - Domestic Offer commences - 9: 30 a.m., 11 March 2005
   - Domestic Offer closes - 12:00 noon, 17 March 2005
   - Expected Listing Date - 22 March 2005

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10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

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US soldiers to return to Basilan

JOLO, Sulu—American military forces are going back to Basilan for another joint military training with Filipino soldiers next month.

Lt. Col. Greg Wilson, chief of the US Armed Forces in Southern Command, said they would be holding another exercise dubbed "Balance Piston" for Basilan-based soldiers who had undergone Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) training in Malagutay, Zamboanga City two years ago.

Wilson said two battalions of soldiers, or about 200 Filipino troopers, would undergo training "to enhance their capabilities in fighting terrorism."

"We will be sending 30 to 40 US military trainers there," Wilson told local reporters.

Another "security assistance training" will start within the year in Zamboanga City.

The three-week training in the island-province will start on April 11.

In 2002, Basilan hosted the Balikatan 02-1 which lasted for almost a year. Five battalions of soldiers based in that province and at least 220 American troopers took part in the war games.

The US soldiers also conducted humanitarian missions and built bridges, roads, water wells and school buildings in the province.

"We are here working very closely with the Southern Command in Mindanao doing some development projects," Wilson said.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza visited Sulu yesterday with Wilson and Maj. David Hsu, who is also with the US Armed Forces in Southern Command.

Braganza said he would recommend the holding of Balikatan exercises in Sulu. The exercises, however, would focus on humanitarian missions.

"That's why we brought Colonel Wilson here because we are seeing here a Basilan-type activity. They have done a good job in Basilan and they are very much welcome here in Sulu," Braganza said.

But Wilson said he could still not say if there were plans to hold any exercise in Sulu.

Braganza and the US military officials yesterday welcomed the arrival of the 55th Engineering Brigade to start the rehabilitation of areas devastated by the recent fighting between government troops and followers of former Moro National Liberation Front chair Nur Misuari, who is in jail on rebellion charges.

Brig. Gen. Sergio Candelario, commander of the 55th Engineering Brigade, said more than two companies of soldiers and seven military engineers would be involved in the rehabilitation program. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Antiterror squads in quarrying questioned

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—An official of a nongovernment organization questioned the continued deployment of the police's Special Action Forces (SAF) in Pampanga's quarry checkpoints.

"What are they guarding against? Aren't they supposed to go after terrorists?" asked Fr. Resty Lumanlan, chair of the Save Pampanga Movement, during a public consultation here on Thursday.

The consultation tackled the weaknesses in the provincial government's monitoring of the quarry industry and its collection of sand taxes.

Lumanlan raised the questions after pointing out that SAF, which was formed to be in the forefront of the police's counter-terrorism campaign, has not been helpful in stopping the illegal extraction of sand, which was being done some 500 meters from the Mancatian Bridge in Porac town.

He said it took 12 years of lobbying before the town's residents convinced President Macapagal-Arroyo to fund the construction of that P300-million bridge. It was inaugurated in March last year.

Lumanlan said it was not also clear what assistance the SAF troops actually lent to the four "collection points" in Porac, the hometown of Gov. Mark Lapid.

In an earlier interview, Mayor Exequiel Gamboa said the municipal government collected sand taxes at the checkpoints, and not at the treasurer's office.

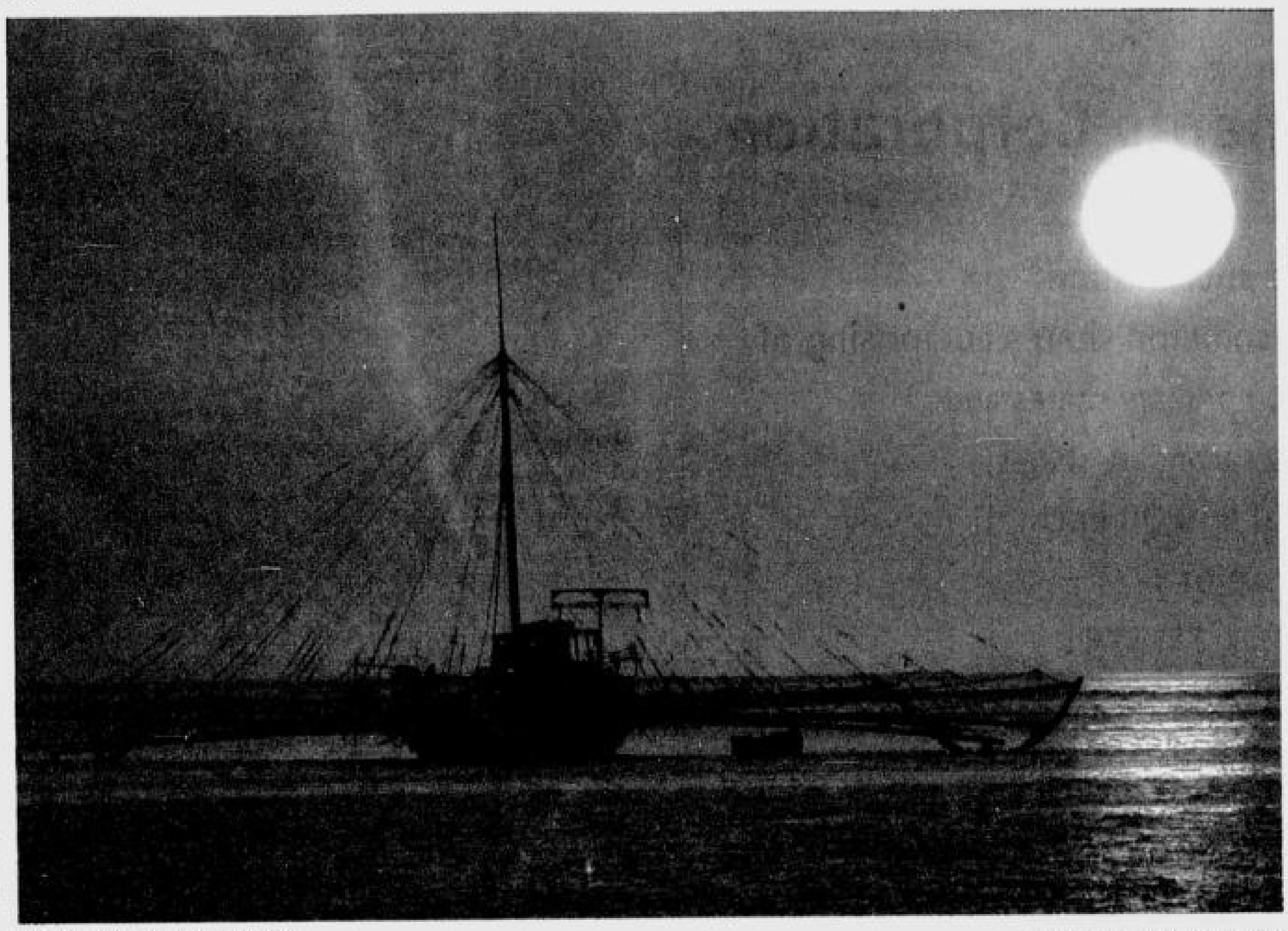
In a checkpoint in Barangay Manibaug, the INQUIRER saw a collector handing out receipts and receiving payments for P70 worth of sand fees. No SAF personnel was, however, seen in that collection station.

At least three quarry operators said each of the 20 SAF men stationed in the quarry checkpoints gets a daily allowance of between P1,000 and P1,500.

The allowances, they said, come from the collections and the cut reduces the already low quarry revenues.

But Chief Supt. Marcelino Franco, SAF national commander, said his men were not receiving allowances coming from quarry revenues.

Franco, in a telephone interview on Saturday, said he was willing to be investigated on this issue. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*


TROY MALCOLM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

ZAMBOANGA SUNSET
The setting sun paints a picture of calm and casts a warm glow at the Zamboanga City port, once the site of military exercises involving American and Filipino soldiers.

Mayor Vi's aide, friend shot dead in Lipa City

LIPA CITY—An aide of Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto and his companion were gunned down while a city government employee was wounded inside a makeshift canteen just outside the perimeter fence of City Hall after the flag ceremony yesterday morning.

Senior Supt. David Quimio, city police chief, identified the victims as Gil Castillo, 40, Santos-Recto's executive assistant who was detailed at the city's Traffic Management Division (TMD), and his son-in-law, Kennie Hernandez, a newly employed casual worker at the TMD. The two were inside the canteen when they were shot.

Quimio said witnesses saw two unidentified men riding on an apple green motorcycle and armed with .45 cal. pistols.

Both Castillo and Hernandez, a native of Carmona, Cavite, died on the spot from multiple bullet wounds in different parts of their bodies.

Rex Bogis, 31, of Barangay Bulacnin, a messenger of the city administration department, was hit by stray bullets in the right thigh. He was brought to the Lipa City Medix Hospital.

Castillo was reportedly the unofficial market administrator here.

Quimio said they had no information about the assailants and their motive. They escaped during the ensuing commotion and stampede at City Hall, he said.

Quimio said Castillo, a resident of Barangay 5, was also known as Boy Baguio and was the right hand man of former Baguio City Councilor Roberto Ortega, who had also served as police chief of the country's summer capital.

After Ortega's group dismantled, Castillo returned to Lipa.

According to an INQUIRER source here, Castillo had been known as a senator's top gunman and had made enemies for various reasons.

Quimio denied Castillo's dark background, saying he was no longer connected with the market or had served as a security officer of the mayor and the senator.

"Castillo is just a casual worker at the Traffic Management Division," Quimio said. *Mei Magsino-Lubis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Board asks CHR to probe firm on workers' eviction

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Retrenched employees of Philex Mines in Tuba, Benguet, won a victory of sorts when the provincial board formally asked the Commission on Human Rights to investigate the company's alleged human rights violations in the implementation of its decongestion plan.

In a resolution approved on Monday, the board coursed the request for an investigation to the CHR central office following complaints that its regional office in Baguio City "acted inappropriately and negligently" in handling the gripes of the employees when they first sought help before the office.

The board asked lawyer Purificacion Valera-Quisumbing, CHR chair, to investigate the regional office for possible violation of the code of conduct for government employees.

The resolution, however, failed to say something on the ultimatum given by Philex Mines to the retrenched employees to leave the company premises on or before April 15.

The retrenched employees earlier complained that the company evicted them from their bunkhouses despite a pending labor case questioning the legality of their retrenchment.

They said the company wanted to evict them despite their children still being enrolled at the school subsidized by the company.

They added that the company also forcibly cut off their power supply and prohibited them from engaging in business within company premises.

But Philex officials remained unperturbed by the board's resolution calling for an investigation.

"We will welcome any investigation," lawyer Eduardo Aratas, chief of the company's legal division, said. "Our actions are all above board and we did not violate any right since we have observed due process."

He said that some of the complaints are exaggerated. "The employees were long informed of our decongestion plan and the court had already decided in our favor," he said.

Aratas was referring to a recent decision of the regional trial court here denying the employees' plea for a restraining order and injunction to stop the company from evicting the retrenched workers. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Execs cleared of graft over reconditioned equipment

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Office of the Ombudsman has cleared former Dumaguete Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo and four members of the Dumaguete City Committee on Awards for the 1999 purchase of heavy equipment worth P15.49 million during Remollo's administration.

In a 17-page decision dated Feb. 21, Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro said the complainants, led by now Mayor Agustin Perdices, failed to prove that the transaction was tainted with anomalies and irregularities.

Along with Remollo, the Ombudsman also cleared former City Administrator Ricardo Gonzales, the late City Accountant Daylinda Villahermosa, acting City Budget Officer Ramon Pinero, and acting City Treasurer Erlinda Tumongha, who were all members of the Committee on Awards.

Also cleared of the charges were Danilo Maglasang and Benjamin Momongan, inspectors of Commission on Audit in Central Visayas and Leon B. Tio, president of TKC Heavy Industries, the winning supplier of the controversial bulldozer, wheel loader and roller.

Perdices said the city will file a motion for reconsideration.

Remollo's administration bought supposedly brand new pieces of heavy equipment worth P15.5 million but these turned out to be reconditioned units.

Lawyer says pact with MNLF a failure

DAVAO CITY—The peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was a flop because the government violated some of its provisions, an MNLF lawyer said.

This has put the government's integrity into question, according to Randolf Parcasio, MNLF legal counsel.

"If government fails to honor provisions in the peace pact with the MNLF, how can it be expected to deal with the upcoming talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front?" Parcasio asked.

Parcasio, who talked during a forum on Sulu, said that the government failed to honor provisions in the peace pact, particularly those which concerned the Moro people's rights over natural resources.

Although the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao remains one of the country's poorest and most depressed regions, the area is also one of the richest in terms of oil and gold deposits.

"The people are supposed to mine the natural resources under the areas granted with autonomy but now, it's the national government mining these areas," he said.

He said instead of honoring the agreement, the government passed a law putting energy resources, including lakes and rivers, under its control.

Parcasio said that government's failure to honor the natural resources provision in its peace agreement with the MNLF will eventually have a bearing in the government's upcoming peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), where the ancestral domain issue is on top of the agenda.

"The ancestral domain concept by the MILF is much broader compared to that of the MNLF," he said. "In the MILF concept, the ancestral domain carries with it the rights over territory, governance and the people," Parcasio told INQUIRER.

"If government failed to honor the simple provision in the MNLF peace agreement, how can we expect it to resolve the ancestral domain rights issues with MILF, which is even broader and more complex?" he said.

Parcasio said that the ancestral domain issue will be a major stumbling block in the peace agreement with the MILF.

Parcasio also echoed calls by peace advocates for former President Fidel Ramos to step in for a more peaceful resolution of the raging conflict in Sulu.

"I'm not especially very fond of (former President) Ramos, but in his time, he was able to sign the peace agreement. Maybe, he can play a crucial role in stalling the war in Mindanao," he said. *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mayor says he's confident murder raps won't prosper

LAOAG City Mayor Michael Fariñas yesterday expressed confidence that the murder charges filed against him in connection with the slaying of his vice mayor, Jimmy Chua, would be eventually dismissed for lack of evidence.

In a press statement, Fariñas said the case filed by the National Bureau of Investigation at the Department of Justice was filed haphazardly, bolstering his earlier suspicion that politics is behind the murder charges against him.

"Based on the charge sheet, the evidence against me is very weak and yet the NBI filed the case with the DOJ. I am confident that the case against me will eventually be dismissed by the DOJ," Fariñas said in his press statement.

Aside from Fariñas, the NBI recommended the filing of obstruction of justice against nine other persons, including Supt. Joel Pagdilao, Laoag City police chief; SPO3 Arthur Mateo, chief investigator of the Laoag City police; and Councilor Melvin de la Cuesta, the supposed witness against Fariñas.

De la Cuesta earlier alleged that a hired killer, identified as a certain Steve of Sinait, Ilocos Sur, shot and killed Vice Mayor Chua in the early dawn of Feb. 2 in front of the Eagle's Nest Restaurant in Laoag City.

De la Cuesta later recanted and suddenly pointed to Fariñas as the one who accidentally shot Chua in front of Pagdilao and himself.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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The Pontifical and Royal

University of Santo Tomas

The Catholic University of the Philippines

congratulates and salutes its outstanding achievers for the [illegible]

Student Awards Day on March 15, 2005 9:00 a.m. at the [illegible]

RECTOR'S ACADEMIC AWARD

Sem. Noel Vincent B. Abalajon	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Sem. Michael John M. Tamayao	Faculty of Philosophy
Bingle B. Talatala	Faculty of Civil Law
Mark A. Sison	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Michael Conrad L. Tongol	Faculty of Pharmacy
Martin Louie C. Danao	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Francis Gerard P. Gonzales	Faculty of Engineering
Christina S. De Maiwat	College of Education
Sarah Camille M. Concepcion	College of Science
Doni Rae R. Dionisio	College of Architecture
Manny John M. Tan	College of Commerce and Accountancy
Ma. Florence M. Aguilar	Conservatory of Music
Joyzen R. Cortez	College of Nursing
Kimberlyn U. Sy	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Gail Genevieve H. Ang	College of Fine Arts and Design
Catherine E. Jordan	UST High School
John Irvin D. Teodoro	Education High School
Nerissa F. Kalaw	Elementary Department

POPE LEO XIII COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AWARD

GROUP CATEGORY

Theological Society	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Medical Missions, Inc. – Student Group	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Red Cross Youth Council Pharmacy Unit	Faculty of Pharmacy
Association of Civil Engineering Students	Faculty of Engineering
Philippine Association of Nutrition	College of Education-Omega Chapter
Psychological Society	College of Science
Junior Chamber of Business Administrators	College of Commerce and Accountancy
Medical Missions, Inc. – Nursing Unit	College of Nursing
UST High School Student Council	UST High School

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY

Sem. Rodelio S. Ignacio	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Pamela A. Abayon	College of Commerce and Accountancy
Gail Genevieve H. Ang	College of Fine Arts and Design

QUEZON LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sem. Noel Vincent B. Abalajon	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Sem. Bryann Jett S. Pano	Faculty of Philosophy
Phillip C. Adviento	Faculty of Civil Law
Reiner Henson B. See	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Franklin Ace R. Panuncio	Faculty of Pharmacy
Keem Kenneth N. Santos	Faculty of Engineering
Charina Therese L. Dañas	College of Education
Martin Paolo Z. Bernabe	College of Science
Haidee L. Lim	College of Architecture
Niña Riña R. Tecson	College of Commerce and Accountancy
Glenda C. Gubac	College of Nursing
Xialeemar T. Valdeavilla	College of Fine Arts and Design and Office for Student Affairs

BENAVIDES OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY

Rosita Alyssa M. Baua	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Angelo V. Suarez	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Yvette Kristine S. Taberna	Faculty of Engineering
Precious E. de la Cruz	Conservatory of Music
Raymond M. de Leon	Conservatory of Music
Ron Jacob P. Gaan	Conservatory of Music
Joseph Christian L. Panganiban	Conservatory of Music
Neil C. Reyes	Conservatory of Music
Rachel Marie C. Capili	College of Nursing
Jamie E. Pring	UST High School
Giorgio Von Gerri G. de Guzman	UST High School
Genesis A. Timbol	Education High School
Regina Fatima V. Amago	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Tshomlee C. Go	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Renz Louise L. Urbano	Department of Military Science and Tactics
Jerome L. Go	Office for Student Affairs

GROUP CATEGORY

Inter Nos	Faculty of Sacred Theology
Pharmacy Quiz Team	Faculty of Pharmacy
Medical Technology Quiz Team	Faculty of Pharmacy
ECE PLC Programming Team	Faculty of Engineering
Charlene T. Loo and Lorraine Adeline B. Nicolas	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Lauren B. Pacis, Michelle Cherry I. Tolentino and Martha Angela J. Montemar	College of Rehabilitation Sciences
Dialektikos Debating Team	UST High School
Badminton Men's Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Table Tennis Men's Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
Taekwondo Men's Team	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics
UST Salinggawi Dance Troupe	Institute of Physical Education and Athletics

ST. DOMINIC DE GUZMAN AWARD

Faculty of Philosophy Students' Forum	Faculty of Philosophy
Medicine Student Council	Faculty of Medicine and Surgery
Organization of Medical Technology Interns	Faculty of Pharmacy
Arts and Letters Student Council	Faculty of Arts and Letters
Education Student Council	College of Education
College of Science Student Council	College of Science
United Architects of the Philippines Student Auxiliary	College of Architecture
Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants	College of Commerce and Accountancy
Pax Romana Nursing Unit	College of Nursing
Student Catholic Action	UST High School
Boy & Girl Scouts of the Philippines	Education High School - EHS Chapter
Grade School Student Council	Elementary School
Central Student Council	Office for Student Affairs

SPECIAL CITATION

Student Tourism Society	College of Education

SPECIAL ALUMNI GUESTS

Mr. Victorino P. Vianzon (Guest Speaker)	Bachelor of Science in Commerce 1974
Mr. Alfredo M. Velayo (Special Guest)	Bachelor of Science in Commerce 1939

BOARD TOPNOTCHERS

ACCOUNTANCY (October 2004)

Rachelle DL. Arzaga	5th
Kristy Anne D. Calmona	6th
Jessica C. Batalla	8th
Ruth F. Blasco	14th
Maria Pia C. Pagtalunan	15th
James Patrick Q. Bonus	16th
Angelica H. Espiritu	16th
Desiree Joy C. Suarez	19th

ARCHITECTURE (January 2005)

Arch. John Patrick Anthony L. Buensalido	1st
Arch. Gerard Michael D. Dy	3rd
Arch. Andrew Benedict L. Sy	6th
Arch. Vergel Angelo P. Paule	7th

CHEMISTRY (September 2004)

Roldan M. De Guia	1st

ENGINEERING (November 2004)

Jason G. Pablo	5th
Arvil Isaiah G. De Villa	6th
Mark Anthony C. Ancheta	7th
Jensen A. Bantaya	8th

(May 2004)

Winston R. Wang	2nd

INTERIOR DESIGN (October 2004)

Marie Antonette A. Estandian	3rd
Rachelle Apple T. Tiuseco	6th
Christine Joy V. Papa	10th

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY (March 2004)

Charlene Ann V. Balili	9th

(September 2004)

Mark Christian P. Pabustan	1st
Philip B. Antiporda	3rd
Christine Joy R. Pega	7th
Joseph Joy G. Banzon	8th
Leonardo R. Barnachea	11th
Lily Lyralin DL. Laconico	15th
Ma. Krisette L. Salazar	15th

MEDICINE (August 2004)

Maria Luisa C. Rivera	4th
Cristina V. Jaring	5th
Irene P. Villanueva	5th
Sherry Mae D. Imperio	6th
Frederick Allen L. Fuentes	7th
Antonette B. Climaco	9th
John Paul B. Pua	13th
Joyce Cristina F. Ibe	15th
Ria Arlina C. Calata	17th
Gerby D. Coronel	18th
Anthony F. Felipe	18th
Andre Angelo G. Tanque	20th

(February 2005)

Emy Lisa Oh	3rd
Christian Lanot	6th
Ma. Solina Ocomer	12th
Petronito Reyes	18th
Salvador Rivera	20th

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (February 2005)

Michael L. Yutadco	4th
Mildea M. Andres	5th

PHARMACY (July 2004)

Werner R. Umali	2nd
Djaninah A. De Guzman	4th
Jewellynn Ruth V. Que	5th
Kristopher D. Rapada	9th
Juvy P. Lim	11th
Erin M. Ong	13th
Emelyn A. Ancheta	18th
Arcyditha T. Uy	18th
Sherie Pearl O. Dela Cruz	19th

PHYSICAL THERAPY (February 2005)

Katherine S. Uy	1st
Airish L. Barraca	6th
Jay Anthony M. Bonoan	8th
Allelula A. Sese	14th

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Tests fail to solve mystery of fish kill in Palawan towns

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The cause of the fish kill in several towns of Palawan remains a mystery.

As early as Feb. 26, fishermen from Quezon and Rizal towns reported that the coastal waters had turned rust brown in color and highly prized commercial species, such as groupers and snappers, were floating.

When the report reached the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) on March 2, they immediately sent personnel to check and brought fish and water samples for laboratory tests.

BFAR-Palawan chief Ruben Jardin said the fish tested negative for cyanide.

They sent samples to Manila, but the results have not been known yet.

Algal bloom

Alex Marcaida, PCSDS information officer, said they did not see traces of chemicals in the samples, but when they tested again, they detected algal bloom.

The book "Green Guide" defined algal bloom as a consequence of euthrophication or over-enrichment of water caused by nitrates in fertilizers running off agricultural fields into local surface water.

A small amount of fertilizer can increase the amount of water life, but if "overdosing" occurs, the result is a runaway growth of algae.

Jardin said tests conducted by the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed some heavy metal particles in the water samples.

They, however, were still not sure where the metals came from.

Over the weekend, the fish kill had spread to the west coast of Puerto Princesa, affecting the fishing villages of Napsan and Simpocan.

The city government's Bantay Dagat team inspected Napsan and confirmed the fish kill but they could not say what caused it.

Ian Marcelo, head of the Bantay Dagat, said they estimated "tons of fish" floating in the coastal waters.

Possible culprits

He said they were checking the possibility that passing vessels had dumped toxic chemicals into the sea.

Yesterday, Benjo Tabang, a volunteer at the Environmental Legal Assistance Center, was brought to the provincial hospital after complaining of stomach pains he suspected was caused by eating fish they found floating in Simpocan.

He said he first thought that he was just having spasms after eating parrot fish, but these persisted until yesterday so he went to the hospital for a check-up. *Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

TUMBLING INDUSTRY BEN MOSES EBREO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A worker puts finishing touches on a wooden statue in Banaue, Ifugao, hoping to continue breathing life to an industry threatened by the suspension of logging in many areas and the scarcity of wood as a result of the government move.

NDF condemns slay attempt on lawyer Capulong

LUCENA CITY—Luis Jalandoni, self-exiled official of the communist-led National Democratic Front, strongly condemned assassination attempts on known leftist lawyer Romeo Capulong and warned that any physical harm done to him would irrevocably end the peace negotiations between the government and the insurgents.

Jalandoni, NDF peace panel chair, said a serious attempt on Capulong's life happened along the national highway at about midnight of March 7 when the lawyer was in Nueva Ecija.

He said a red Revo van, coming from Cabanatuan City and heading west toward La Paz town in Tarlac, slowed down in front of Capulong's house and drove past it.

After several minutes, the vehicle returned and slowed down again. Its occupants rolled down the van's window.

Sensing danger, the two guards provided by Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson to Capulong cocked their rifles. The sound apparently prevented the suspects from carrying out the mission to kill Capulong, Jalandoni said.

Capulong is the NDF's senior legal consultant in its on-and-off peace negotiations with the government.

Jalandoni added that relatives of Capulong also noticed that strange men had been conducting surveillance on his house.

"In the past two weeks, there have been an unusual number of ambulant vendors purportedly selling *taho* [soya drink], *walis tambo* [broom], pots and pans, etc. but were not really selling anything," Jalandoni said in a statement e-mailed from Utrecht, The Netherlands.

With the spate of killings of activists and members of progressive organizations, the latest of which was the assassination of Philippine Independent Church priest William Tadena on Sunday, the NDF official said "the attempt on the life of Attorney Capulong cannot but be taken very seriously."

Jalandoni recalled that, as president of the Public Interest Law Center, Capulong led the fact-finding mission into the Hacienda Luisita massacre in November last year.

He said slain Tarlac City Councilor Abelardo Ladera, together with Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, went to the house of Jose Cojuangco Jr. in Dasmariñas Village in Makati City, Metro Manila, on Nov. 16 to seek a negotiated solution to the strike in the hacienda.

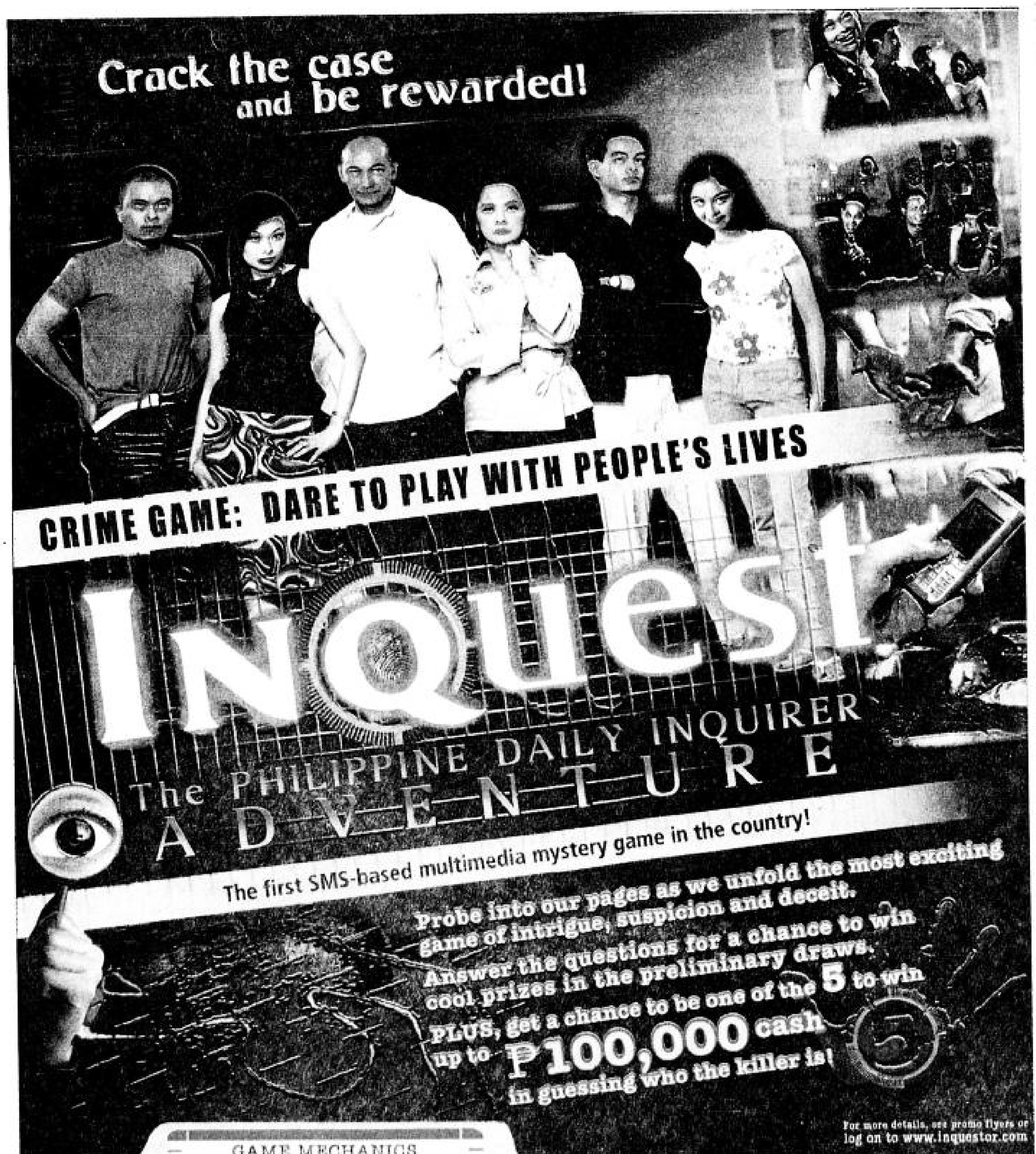
According to Jalandoni, Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco, wife of Jose, confronted Ladera, saying he had no right to come to their house and talk to them (Cojuangcos), as he was on the side of the "enemy."

"Mrs. Cojuangco literally drove him out of the house," Jalandoni said.

"Since then, Attorney Capulong, Councilor Ladera and Congressman Ocampo have been attacked in public utterances and documents of the military. Mrs. Cojuangco is the assistant secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, of which Gen. Angelo Reyes is the secretary," Jalandoni added.

On March 3, still unidentified gunmen assassinated Ladera.

Jalandoni also noted that a day after Capulong interviewed Marcelino Beltran, chair of the peasant alliance in Central Luzon who was the key witness in the Hacienda Luisita massacre, Beltran was also killed on Dec. 8 last year. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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1. Buy a copy of the Philippine Daily Inquirer to follow the INQuest Adventure Mystery and guess the answer to the questions found at the end of the chapter installments.
2. To help you answer the questions, clues can be found in various sections in Philippine Daily Inquirer, INQuest website or INQTV (every Thursdays, 8 to 9pm at ABC5). To answer, text in this format: INQ Q<question #> <answer> and so on. Ex: INQ Q1 A
3. Participant is allowed a maximum of three (3) answers per question. Each text answer entitles the participant one (1) raffle entry to qualify for the preliminary draws.
4. For each successful text sent, participants will receive a confirmation message. The cost for each successful message sent is P2.50 for Globe/Touch Mobile/Smart/Addict and Talk 'N Text subscribers and P2.00 for Sun Cellular subscribers.
5. There will be a total of eight (8) preliminary draws (1 winner each) and one (1) final draw (5 winners). There will only be one (1) winner per question (preliminary draw) but an individual may win again in the succeeding preliminary draws. Final draw winner can only win once.

Clue	Clue Date	Cut-Off	Draw	Bonus Prizes for Correct Answers
Q1	March 9	March 12	March 14	Apple iPod 20GB
Q2	March 16	March 19	March 28	Canon PowerShot A75
Q3	March 23	March 30	April 4	Apple iPod 20GB
Q4	March 31	April 2	April 4	Canon PowerShot A75
Q5	April 6	April 9	April 11	Apple iPod 20GB
Q6	April 10	April 16	April 18	Canon PowerShot A75
Q7	April 17	April 23	April 25	Apple iPod 20GB
Q8	April 24	April 30	May 2	Canon PowerShot A75
Q9	May 1	May 7	May 9	5 x P80,000.00 Cash

6. The winner drawn from the preliminary draw (Q1-Q8) automatically gets to win a Guylito doll. An additional prize (Apple iPod or Canon Digicam) is given if he/she sent a correct answer.
7. The five (5) entries drawn for the final draw (Q9) will automatically receive a cash prize of P20,000.00 cash. An additional P80,000.00 cash prize will be given to those with correct answer.
8. Winners will be notified thru registered mail and names will also be published two (2) days after the draw.
9. Metro Manila preliminary and final draw winners must claim their prizes at the PDI office located at: Chino Roces Ave. cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City.
10. Provincial preliminary draw winners have the option of either claiming their prize in person at the PDI office or have the prize sent to them via courier service. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.
11. The following must be presented for verification:
    a. Valid ID with picture (e.g., driver's license, passport, employee ID)
    b. In case valid IDs do not indicate birthdate/age, present a birth certificate
    c. Copy of PDI's notification/confirmation letter
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16. Promo period is from March 2 to May 7, 2005.

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1123, Series of 2005.

Palace now looking into pact violations of Cordillera rebels

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Fresh from addressing the peace accord violations of the Moro National Liberation Front, Malacañang is monitoring the government's first peace agreement after the 1986 Edsa revolution following complaints of alleged abuses by the Cordillera People's Liberation Army.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said an oversight team had been activated to look into reports that several CPLA members had started squatting in urban areas in the Cordillera.

The Ibalois of Baguio also complained about the inclusion of unified CPLA officers in councils of elders that were set up to advise government on the release of ancestral land titles.

Reason to worry

The Ibalois may have reason to worry.

Mailed Molina, mayor of Bucloc, Abra and a CLPA commander, has secured a property inside the government-owned Baguio Dairy Farm. He is related by marriage to one of its Ibaloi claimants, according to records of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

The Department of Agriculture sued Molina last week, along with members of the Ikang Paus clan.

Secretary Teresita Deles, Ms Arroyo's adviser on the peace process, said squatting violated the 1987 agreement signed by slain rebel priest and CPLA founder Conrado Balweg and former President Corazon Aquino.

"Squatting ... is not covered by the peace agreement. It is not allowed by the peace agreement. What we hope is that by fast-tracking the development in their areas, they will be encouraged to stay in their municipalities because the livelihood will be going to them," she told reporters here.

She said Trade Secretary Juan Santos was "bringing in private sector assistance to improve the coffee industry in the Cordillera," and perhaps introduce new livelihood options for the CPLA.

Result of merger

The unified CPLA is a merger of several factions led by Molina, former rebel James Sawatang and a few Balweg supporters, like Mayor Gabino Ganggangan of Sadanga, Mt. Province.

The government has sanctioned the existence of the unified CPLA whose members were integrated into the military and police in 2001.

Deles said 800 CPLA members had officially been integrated while 1,200 others had been identified as livelihood beneficiaries.

"Ten of the barangays [that the unified CPLA] has pinpointed [as their communities] are included in the Kalahi para sa Kalayaan project, [a convergence program that will raise] immediate infrastructure, such as school buildings, access roads, potable water and electricity," Deles said.

"A lot of CPLA members are from Tinglayan [Abra]. The [Department of Trade and Industry] knows that is where the white water rafting starts. So the one product of the town should involve... tourism," Ms Arroyo said here. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Pesticide, not cyanide, killed 27 pupils in Bohol, DOH declares

From page A1

He said the insecticide might have been "inadvertently mixed" during the preparation of the cassava sweets by Luyong. The chemical is odorless and looks like flour, he noted.

Mandawe said the sachet was in a basket that was hanging in the kitchen near the cooking area.

To make sure the substance was really 1-2-3, the NBI team bought a pack from an Agrivet store in Mabini. When the team opened it, the contents matched.

"While it was still under laboratory exam, our forensic team made a research and found that it was very toxic," Mandawe said. Four grams of the flour-like substance can kill an adult weighing 70 kilograms.

Cockroaches, lice and fleas

The 1-2-3 insecticide can be used to kill or control cockroaches, bed bugs, lice in poultry and birds, and fleas and ticks in dogs and other household animals.

It is also marketed as a powder that can control toilet odor. The insecticide can be applied as a powder or dissolved in water.

Dr. Dario Sabularse, officer in charge of the Fertilizers and Pesticide Authority (FPA), said 1-2-3 was registered with the agency from 1994 to December 2002. It was packed and marketed in sachets of 50 grams.

Because its registration was not renewed, the selling of 1-2-3 has not been allowed since January 2003, according to Sabularse.

Lethal dose

Its main active ingredient is carbaryl and the lethal dose is 3.5 grams per body weight, Sabularse said.

Carbaryl is a wide-spectrum carbamate insecticide, which controls more than 100 species of insects in citrus, fruit, cotton, forests, lawns, nuts, ornamentals, shade trees and other crops, as well as on poultry, livestock and pets in the United States, according to the website of Cornell University's Pesticide Management Education Program.

The chemical name for carbaryl is 1-naphthol N-methylcarbamate. It is moderate to very toxic and is labeled with a warning.

It can produce adverse effects in humans by skin contact, inhalation or ingestion. Direct contact of the skin or eyes with moderate levels can cause burns.

Inhalation or ingestion of very large amounts can be toxic to the nervous and respiratory systems resulting in nausea, stomach cramps, diarrhea and excessive salivation. Other symptoms at high doses include sweating, blurring of vision, incoordination and convulsions.

In the United States, about 50 cases of occupational or accidental illnesses due to exposure to carbaryl have been reported, but no fatalities have been documented. The only documented fatality from carbaryl was through intentional ingestion.

Aggravated

Dayrit said it was very likely that the contaminated cassava merely aggravated what was already an existing case of pesticide poisoning among the children.

"It appears that there were pesticides in the barangay," he said. "If you're using pesticides every day and the children are being exposed every day, the cholinesterase level will decrease," he said.

One possibility was that the cassava had been contaminated when it was prepared and cooked, he said in a statement.

Cholinesterase refers to the enzyme that breaks down and moderates the functions of acetylcholine, the chemical that drives many body functions. When it gets away with excessive amounts, the chemical becomes toxic, Dayrit said.

What a pesticide, specifically its carbomate content, does is to keep cholinesterase from doing its job and thereby allowing acetylcholine to function unbridled and lethally, he explained.

A team of toxicologists from the University of the Philippines' Poison Control Center declared that the poisoning was due to a pesticide after checking clinical findings and laboratory and blood tests.

Antidotes

The cause of poisoning was most likely a pesticide because a number of the 104 survivors got well after taking atropine, a common antidote for pesticide poisoning, or activated charcoal, a general antidote, according to toxicologists Irma Makalino and Lynn Panganiban.

Cyanide was ruled out because the 49 children examined registered a cyanide level of not more than 0.2 mg per liter. Dayrit said a 0.5 level was needed to show significant effects on a victim.

Instead, symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, headache and abdominal pain were more consistent with pesticide, particularly carbomate, poisoning, he said.

Officials had earlier theorized that the poisonous agent was organophosphate, another deadly chemical found in pesticides.

But they settled on carbomate after the symptoms were "reversed" or cured quite quickly, unlike in the case of organophosphate poisoning, which usually takes much longer to contain.

Dayrit urged the FPA to monitor how Filipinos store pesticide in their households to prevent similar cases in the future.

The vendors who sold the sweetened cassava roots as recess snacks to the children—mostly aged 7-13—last week denied improper preparation.

One of the two vendors was among 103 patients who were admitted to four hospitals. The other was in police custody to protect her from outraged parents. Authorities have not ruled out criminal charges.

Puzzling

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco found puzzling the "complications" brought about by the DOH finding and the confession of one vendor who had sold the lethal fried cassava.

"There are conflicts between the vendor's statement that she used the more poisonous variety of cassava and the DOH (finding) that pesticide caused the students' deaths," Wycoco said yesterday.

He said the bureau was conducting a separate investigation to reconcile the discrepancies.

Wycoco said test results would be presented tomorrow.

"We are zeroing in on the hydrocyanic acid, the root crop's inherent poison, and pesticide as possible causes of the food poisoning," he said.

He said the lack of chemicals needed to conduct the laboratory tests in the NBI office in Cebu had prompted the chemist to bring the samples to Manila yesterday afternoon.

Dr. Idabel Pagulayan, NBI chief of forensic chemistry, said the chemist would be bringing the vat used to fry the cassava and sample tissues from the victims.

"The NBI forensic team in the Visayas obtained brain, liver, kidney and stomach tissue samples from both an embalmed student and another victim who had not been embalmed yet," Pagulayan said.

She said it would take 24 hours for the chemist to find out the results of the laboratory tests. *With reports from Chito A. Fuentes and Jolene R. Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau; Chona Galang, PDI Research; and Margaux C. Ortiz*

DOH 'insider' comes out to assail 'Ligtas Buntis'

From page A1

official for Eastern Visayas, denounced the reproductive health program during a forum organized by the Human Life International-Asia in Quezon City.

"I kept quiet for a long time," she said, teary-eyed, while delivering an eight-page speech. "I knew too well that being an insider, and spokesperson for the Department of Health, I would cause a scandal if I made an exposé."

But the "last straw" was Ligtas Buntis, the P150-million campaign which Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said was only meant to ensure maternal and child health.

"I found it so deceptive, highly immoral, and so revolting … (it is) the worst corruption ever, as it is not only corruption of money, but (the) corruption of human lives," Acosta said.

"I never thought that at my age, I would be saying goodbye to government service," she said. "I thought, I only have one life to live. If I could offer this life to make a difference in the world, so be it."

Acosta claimed the campaign was "nothing but the provision of contraceptives and sterilization services, house to house."

"It is apparent the DOH now considers pregnancy a disease, just like measles and polio," she said.

She narrated that when she shared her reservations with her director, he allegedly told her, "Separate your morality from your work."

Asked for comment, Dayrit said he knew about Acosta's position even before Ligtas Buntis was launched. He said she was the "health worker" who refused to support the program and he had spoken about her in previous press conferences.

"I don't take it against her," he told the INQUIRER. "She's just expressing her views. She's very passionate about her position and her faith. That's positive so people would know her views (and this) would help them make an informed choice."

He said he and Acosta even exchanged text messages about her concerns.

"I explained to her that Ligtas Buntis was never about population control or the propagation of contraceptives," he said. "But her conviction [prevents] her from supporting a program that includes contraceptive measures. That's OK."

Sacked or not?

It was not clear if Acosta, an official whom the DOH trained to promote family planning methods, had resigned or was sacked from the department.

In her speech, Acosta said she was relieved as Natural Family Planning program manager in January because of her position against contraceptives and population control.

Dayrit said he learned she had gone Awol (absent without official leave) to campaign with the Church against Ligtas Buntis. "As far I know, she was never kicked out," he said.

An "avid promoter of contraceptives in the past," Acosta said she got her wake-up call during two family planning training sessions organized by the DOH in Manila.

"There, it became very clear to me, that IUDs (intrauterine devices) work essentially as an abortifacient," she said.

The coil-like device is inserted and kept in the uterus. Not only does it prevent a newly conceived baby from implanting itself in the uterus' walls, it also causes inflammation, even infection.

Contraceptives or faith?

Acosta, once the campaign manager for Eastern Visayas of former Health Secretary and now Sen. Juan Flavier, was appalled when she heard that the DOH allegedly promoted the contraceptives as safe and not as abortifacients.

She said she got a copy of "The Essentials of Contraceptive Technology," the DOH's supposed bible on the measure, which purportedly detailed the possible side effects of every contraceptive and sterilization method.

"Let us reexamine our conscience, especially now that it is Lent," she said. "Are we really living by the values of our faith?"

Dayrit yesterday said he never instructed health workers to promote contraceptives as the main option for families.

"We don't (just) hand out contraceptives. We take pains in explaining what they are for, including their possible side effects," he said.

He said advocates of population control were, in fact, incensed when he refused to buy more contraceptives. He said the DOH had yet to dispose of its existing stocks.

Guests miss new PNP chief during turnover …

From page A1

relatives, three siblings, his children, politicians and foreign dignitaries.

"Yes, they came … [but] they will understand [why I had to leave]," he said.

The new PNP chief said he was to take his oath in Malacañang at 3 p.m. yesterday. But as of 4 p.m., he was still in the NCRPO compound.

Shortly after 4 p.m., Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters that the 3 p.m. turnover rites had been postponed. But Bunye said Lomibao was scheduled to be in Malacañang at 6:30 p.m. for an event.

Lomibao was among those invited to a meeting of the Presidential Commission on Values Formation at the Palace, Bunye said.

Among those who came to Camp Crame were Benigno Lomibao, the PNP chief's 71-year-old cousin.

"We were with him in his brother's home yesterday," Benigno told the INQUIRER as he waited patiently for news. "We are very excited."

By 11 a.m., a senior official told some 600 officers who were to take part in the ceremony to take an early lunch—a sign that the ceremony would not resume for at least one hour. "The order is to stay put," the official said.

Two-week practice

The officers had practiced for the ceremony for at least two weeks, at times marching under the scorching sun. By 9 a.m., the colors had been raised and the visitors had started to arrive.

But by lunch time, it was clear that Lomibao could not go back to PNP headquarters for his oath-taking.

It would have been the first time that a PNP chief would swear on a Bible and receive a copy of the Philippine Constitution and the PNP Code of Ethics instead of the traditional saber.

Director General Edgar Aglipay, who retired yesterday, said he was "saddened" by the bloody turn of events at the BJMP [Bureau of Jail Management and Penology]." He and top officials had conferred at the BJMP administration building.

But he said, "This is not our responsibility. The PNP's support was just asked to resolve this matter."

Lomibao said the police were in the area "simply to assist" the BJMP.

Snipers, negotiators

Members of the Special Action Force and Regional Special Action Unit, armed with assault rifles and grenades, took up positions around the 5-story jail building. Snipers could be seen on roofs of buildings adjacent to the jail.

"They're ready to enter anytime the negotiation bog down," a junior official told the INQUIRER.

Inside the jail complex, Gov. Farouk Hussin of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujib Hataman, aided by three negotiators trained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, were talking to the Abu Sayyaf members, hoping to end the crisis before night time.

Capture of Dante

The new PNP chief played a key role in the capture of Bernabe Buscayno, alias Kumander Dante, then head of the communist New People's Army, in Mexico, Pampanga in 1976.

"He [Buscayno] was very elusive," said Rep. Amado Espina, then a second lieutenant in the Philippine Constabulary. Espina and Lomibao are members of the Philippine Military Academy's Class 1972. Both were intelligence officers detailed at Camp Olivas in Pampanga.

They were part of the team tasked with tracking down and capturing Buscayno—dead or alive.

"I was in charge of the operations on the ground. Art [Lomibao] was in charge of analyzing documents. A lot of documents were coming in and he was poring over them," Espina said.

On the night of the arrest, Espina said Lomibao personally placed stones in front of houses in a village in Barangay Sta. Rosario, Mexico, where Ka Dante was most likely to stay. They had tracked the rebel leader by following his wife, who had then just given birth to a boy.

"[The stones] were for our troops, so they wouldn't be confused. They entered all the houses with the stones up front," Espina said, explaining there were around 70 houses in the village. At least two battalions were involved in the operation.

At 4 a.m., Espina and at least four other officers broke into a house in the village. Inside were Ka Dante and his wife Mila.

"I woke him up, touching him with my shoes," he said. There was no fire-fight.

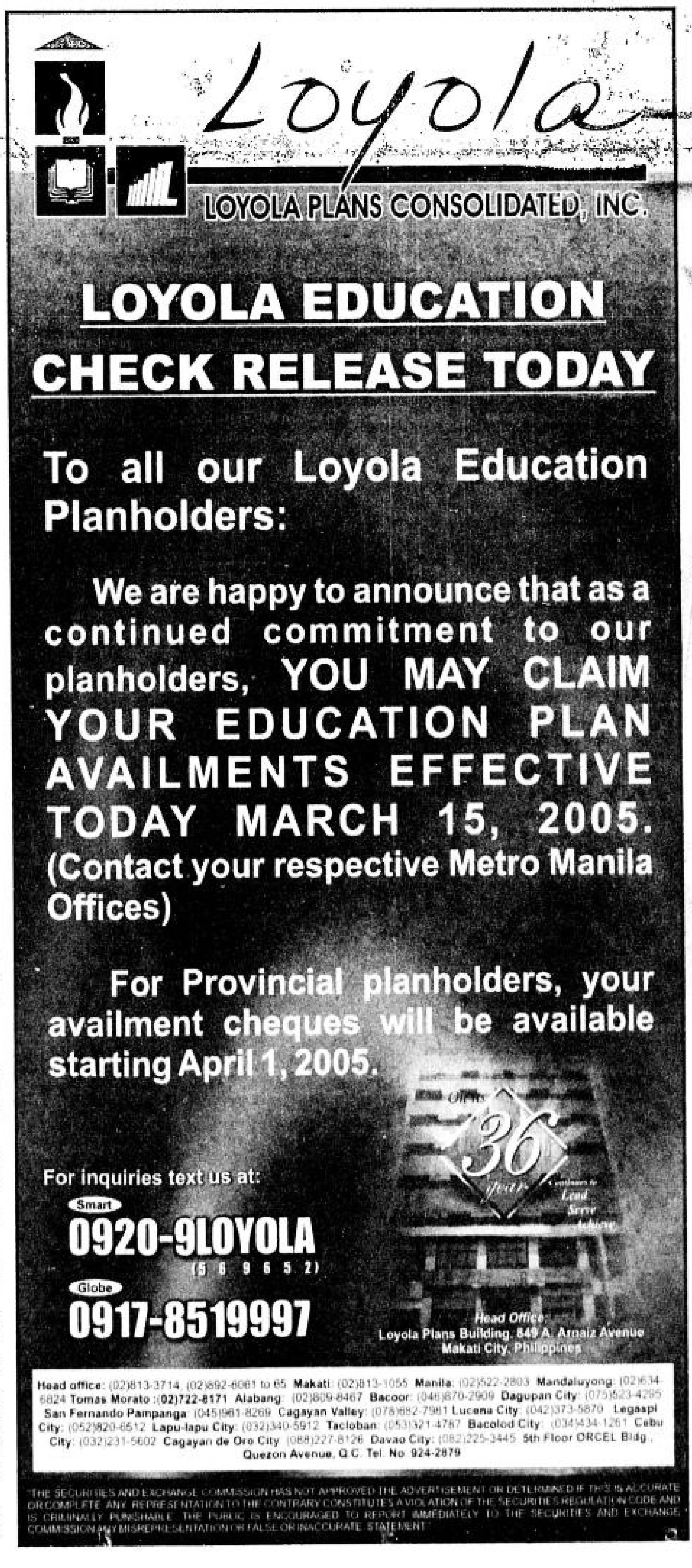
Satur

Lomibao and Espina were also part of the team that tracked down Satur Ocampo, a top communist cadre and now a congressman of the party-list Bayan Muna, in Olongapo City, also in 1976.

Ocampo said he had not closely followed Lomibao's career.

"His name is not that prominent. He was part of the team that arrested me in 1976 [but he did not show himself]," he said.

"What I know is that he was with the intelligence [unit] and he analyzed documents. At least in my experience, he wasn't one of those who interrogated and tortured me," Ocampo said. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*



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Detained for failing to show his ITR

By Michael Lim Ubac

FOR FAILING to show a copy of his latest income tax return (ITR) to members of a congressional committee, the former president of the Multinational Village Homeowners Association in Parañaque City yesterday was placed in the custody of the House sergeant at arms.

The committee had invited Arnel Gacutan to the House as part of their inquiry into the proliferation of drug syndicates in the city. He would remain in the custody of Congress until he produces his 2003 ITR, according to committee chair Ilocos Sur Rep. Roque Ablan Jr.

The inquiry came amid a series of raids on suspected laboratories inside the village. The houses yielded sophisticated equipment and chemicals used for producing methamphetamine hydrochloride, known as shabu.

National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco had earlier linked Gacutan to Chinese nationals who allegedly ran shabu laboratories in the subdivision. The committee had asked Gacutan to produce a copy of his ITR to prove that the money he had used to buy property and build a house in the subdivision did not come from drug syndicates.

At a March 1 hearing, Reps. Ablan, Roilo Golez, Ace Barbers and Antonio Cuenco said they were puzzled over Gacutan's capacity to buy the property.

Gacutan countered that he had been engaged in the construction business for about 10 years, but opted to invoke his right against self-incrimination when asked about his total assets.

At yesterday's hearing, Gacutan pleaded with the committee to give him more time to produce his ITR, which the lawmakers had demanded since March 1.

Asked by Golez to at least give a rough estimate of his net worth, Gacutan invoked his right to privacy.

"My mother is very sick. *Ayoko na* (Enough already)," said Gacutan, maintaining that his rags-to-riches success story had nothing to do with drugs.

Gacutan earlier claimed that local politics was behind the smear campaign against him.

"We're not violating his rights. We required him to submit the ITR because it's relevant to our inquiry in aid of legislation," said Cuenco, noting that his colleagues had extended the deadline several times.

The congressman blamed Gacutan for not bringing a copy of his ITR when the businessman had already been warned that he would be held in contempt if he did not do so.

In a separate interview, Gacutan said he did not present his ITR as his lawyers had advised him that it was "irrelevant" to the hearing.

He added that he would only submit his ITR to a proper court as he dared his critics to file charges against him instead of subjecting him to trial by publicity. *With Nikko Dizon*

Study on ferry service safety urged

By Leila B. Salaverria

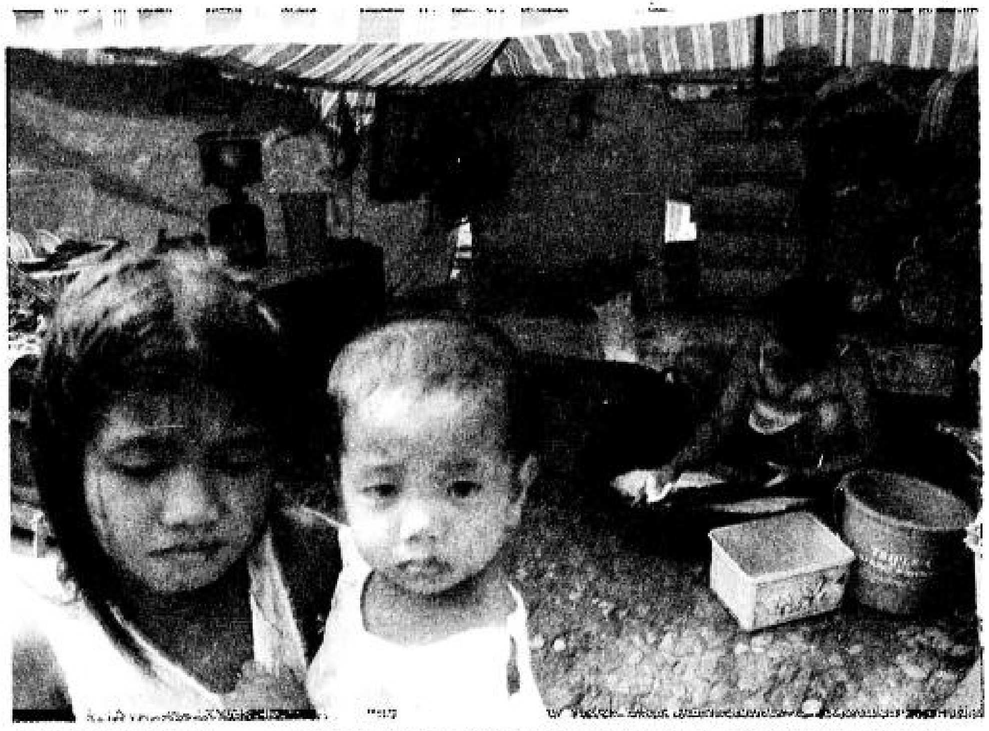
THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard has recommended that the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) study the safety of motorized boats or bancas used to ferry passengers across the Pasig River so that measures could be added to guard the welfare of passengers.

Marina is the body that regulates the Pasig River ferries.

The recommendation came after PCG Commandant Vice Admiral Arthur Gosingan ordered an investigation of the accident last week where two brothers died when they tried to rescue passengers of a capsized boat at the Pasig River.

In the report submitted to Gosingan, Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo said that Marina should evaluate the risk of allowing motorized bancas to ferry passengers across the Pasig River.

Tamayo said there should be measures regulating the speed limit of the ferries and their routes in order to avoid accidents.



AN UNCERTAIN future awaits these children of informal settlers relocated to Valenzuela City who are facing a new eviction notice.

JOAN BONDOC

Displaced folk face 2nd eviction

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO HUNDRED fifty-three families who had been evicted in Malabon and relocated in Canumay, Valenzuela, are faced with the prospect of moving again when Valenzuela City Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian refused to recognize the site as a resettlement area, despite the owner's permission to use it for socialized housing.

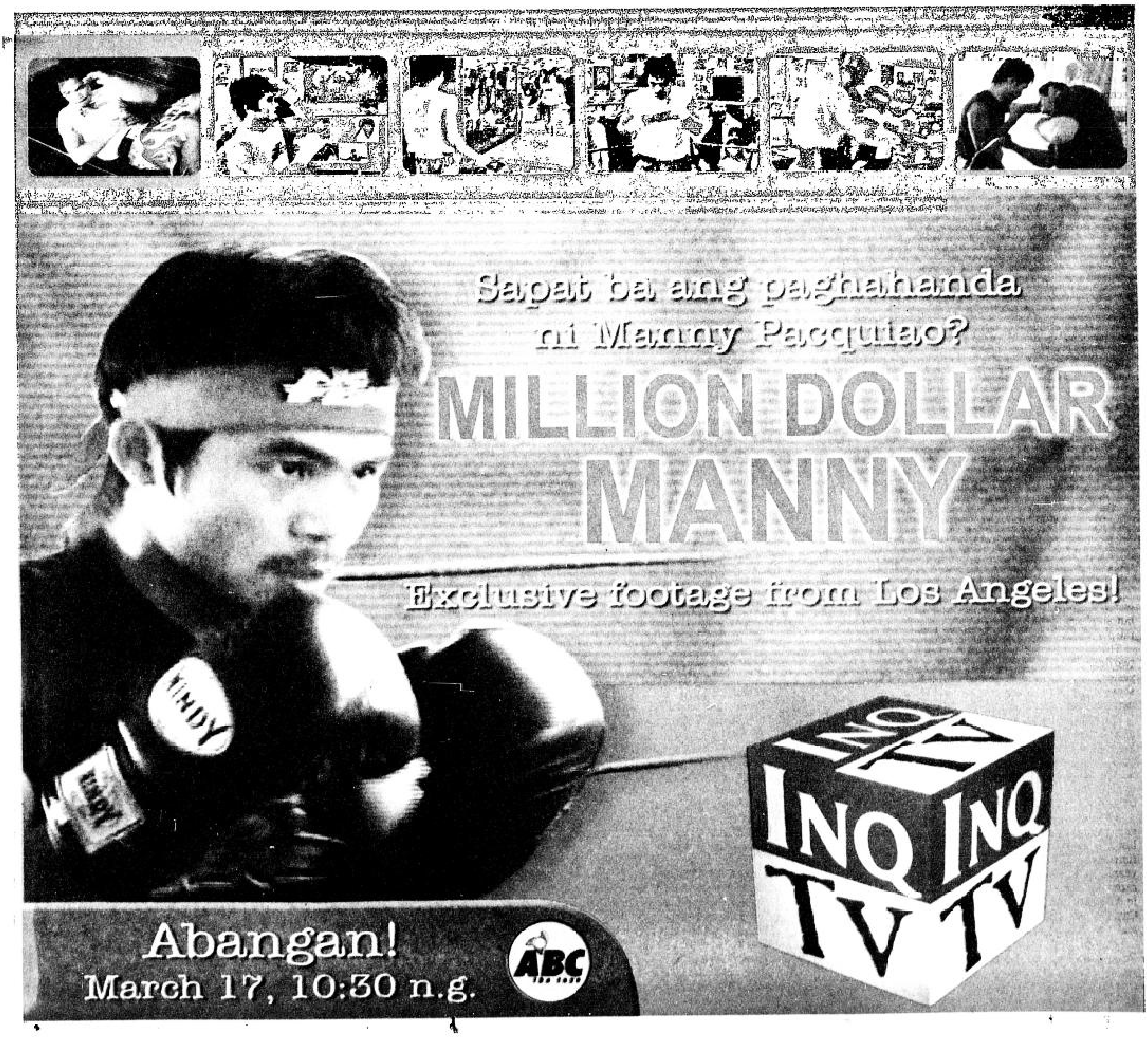
According to the informal settlers' leader, Ador Palma, they were brought by the National Housing Authority to Canumay after they had complied with all the requirements of the housing agency and the owner of the land, Basque Corporation.

Palma said that since Feb.14 the informal settlers had been using tents for shelter and had been sleeping on the ground because deliveries of materials for their houses at the relocation site were allegedly not allowed by Gatchalian.

"We had completed all the requirements, but the mayor would not leave us alone," Palma said. " We were told that the deliveries for our housing materials would be blocked by police at the entrance to the site."

Residents told the INQUIRER that they would not leave because they had moved out of Malabon peacefully and had followed legal procedures.

Gatchalian directed the City Engineer's office and the Philippine National Police to implement his ejection order through an executive order signed on Feb. 17, three days after the informal settlers moved to the area. The order required settlers to "cease and desist from engaging in any socialized housing project activity and prohibits settlers from any influx and entry therein." The mayor cited a report submitted by the Office of the City Engineer as basis of his decision, adding that Basque had "failed to conform with Zoning Ordinance of Land Use Plan of the City." bug



BIR gets tough on QC tax evaders, files charges

By Michelle V. Remo

IN PURSUIT of the government's renewed campaign against tax cheats, the Bureau of Internal Revenue filed charges last week against small- and medium-sized businesses and commercial establishments in Quezon City for committing various tax-related offenses.

"I reiterate my early warning to taxpayers that the BIR meant business and will seek out those unscrupulous taxpayers who think they can continue to cheat the government," BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said in a statement.

The different tax violations of the businesses were discovered during a "tax mapping" operation conducted in Quezon City by revenue personnel last week. During tax mapping, BIR representatives are sent to the field to check whether or not business establishments comply with tax policies.

The violations committed by the businesses include failure to register, failure or refusal to issue receipts/invoices, use of unregistered receipts/invoices, failure to register books of account, failure to record daily sales entries, and failure to display certificate of registration.

Caught for violating BIR rules were: New Transtar Diesel center; SBL Auto Supply & Gen. Mdse.; BJB Enterprises; Carol Innah Food Stuff; Lion Granite Construction Supply; Danny Co.; CTMD Marble & Pebbles Supply; Hot Stuff Bar; Teen 18 Pharmacy; Deco Krel Interiors; Rafnefeldeo Cocktail Lounge KTV; Sage Internet Gaming; MCL Manpower Services; RS Goldmine Auto Supply; Aleka Restaurant; Yevel Fresh & Chilled Meat Shop; Simpletech Merchandise; TJSA Steel Ply & Gen Mdse.; Bulaluhan sa España; Kathlee die-Cutting; Norville Engine builders/Spare Parts; Mariena Car Aircon Specialist; Cervo Battery Sales; EP Esmeralda Merchandising; High Trans Marketing & Gen. Mdse.; Fran Gas & Gen. Mdse.; Julie's Bakeshop; Mel Salazar Auto Center; Leiks Curtains Homes; and Strategies 1 Café.

The following proprietors were also charged: Jeric Amparo, Florena Pineda, Michelle Espares, Edner Sanguyo, Nelso De Los Santos, Ricky Tamayo, and Emma Mercado.

According to the BIR's Quezon City Regional Office, the office is targeting a tax-map of 5,000 establishments within the year. The entire BIR network would visit 350,000 business establishments from last year's 300,000, it added. Based on last year's record, over 90 percent of visited establishments were found guilty of one or more tax-related violations, the BIR said.

The tax mapping operation complements the RATE (Run After Tax Evaders) program, under which the BIR and the Department of Finance, its head agency, file tax evasion cases every week against celebrities or well-known business personalities. The objective of the RATE is to discourage the public from committing tax dishonesty by prosecuting even high-profile individuals. The BIR and the DOF had filed tax evasion charges against Cristina Aboitiz-Juan, an INQUIRER columnist; and Joel Mendez, a doctor who services socialites.

Stupid BJMP guards

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

HOW UNFORTUNATE that the hostage situation at Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig, took place yesterday when Deputy Director General Arturo Lomibao would have taken his oath as the new Philippine National Police (PNP) chief. Because of the hostage-taking, Lomibao's oath-taking had to be postponed.

Lest the public blame the PNP for situation, where 129 Abu Sayyaf detainees were holding other detainees hostage after killing two guards and another detainee, the fault this time lay with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

The BJMP is different from the PNP, although both agencies are under the Department of Interior and Local Government.

* * *

How could those BJMP guards be so stupid as to trust Abu Sayyaf detainees being tried for practically all the heinous crimes in the book such as kidnapping, rape, murder?

They should have learned from what happened at Camp Crame in 2003 when one or two Abu Sayyaf detainees killed three police guards and held at bay practically the entire PNP for hours. The BJMP guards were too trusting of their Abu Sayyaf wards. There's a saying—albeit an ethnic slur—that you can't trust a Moro because a good Moro is a dead Moro.

That's probably generalizing but many incidents—so many, in fact, as to be ignored—wherein non-Moros were killed by Moros because they gave them complete trust. I'd like to cite the case of Lt. Col. Dennis Villanueva, the highest ranking fatality in the renewed fighting in Sulu, who was killed by his own men, former members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) integrated into the Army. The BJMP guards should have been wary of the Abu Sayyaf detainees because they would try to escape when an opportunity arose.

Why in the world would BJMP personnel who were in direct contact with detainees be armed with an M-16 Armalite rifle? Even a pistol carried by a jail guard should not be allowed inside a cell full of prisoners or detainees. Guards in American prisons—I observed during my visits to US correctional facilities under a study grant—were only allowed to carry batons when they were hobnobbing with prisoners. Only guards outside of the area where prisoners congregate carried guns. The reason for this is that prisoners could easily overpower the guards and take them hostage. If the overpowered guards had not been unarmed, then the prisoners would not have guns to fight other guards.

* * *

Top BJMP officials should resign en masse as a result of the Bicutan hostage situation.

English skill gives jobseeker an advantage

By Tina G. Santos

GRADUATING students who participated in the Manila City government's English proficiency program appear to have an advantage over those who did not.

David Galang, Pamantasan ng Lunsod ng Maynila (PLM) dean of students, said the participants got a minimum of five job offers each.

The university official said at least 1,342 graduating students benefited from the program. The numerous job offers appeared to validate Manila Mayor Lito Atienza's claim that the English-proficient students always have an edge.

After a year of implementing the English policy, Atienza expressed satisfaction over reports submitted by presidents of city-run schools regarding the implementation of the program. He also encouraged school officials to intensify the program's implementation.

At the PLM, the biggest city-owned university where English policy was first implemented last year, the training of the first group of faculty and staff members was completed through the school's English as a Second Language Center (ESLC). The trainees now serve as facilitators in the ESLC training of other teachers and students. The English-only policy, an initiative of City Hall, requires city-run colleges to use English as medium of instruction and communication. It aims to give graduates English-language skills to enhance their chances in finding jobs.

"The ESL training is a great help to us, including those who are not English teachers but teach courses using the English language," PLM ESL director Cherry Lynn Laguidao said.

Still on top after 20 years

By D.J. Yap

TWENTY years after joining the political arena, Herbert Bautista is convinced he has transcended his television and movie star persona.

People, he said, would remember him not just as a comedian who made people laugh, but also as a government official who served the public.

The Quezon City vice mayor celebrated two decades of public service in grand fashion yesterday. The festivities included a *rondalla* show, a job fair, bloodletting for the blood bank, and a poster-making contest.

Bautista said his being an entertainment personality went "hand-in-hand" with his being a public servant. "I went into show business at the age of 10. I went into politics at 17. So, I guess, people easily became accustomed to my being both an entertainment and political figure," he said.

A popular comedian, Bautista starred in such movies as "Bagets" and "Jack en Jill." His last TV appearance was on ABS-CBN's defunct comedy show, "Klasmeyts," a couple of years ago. The 36-year-old began his political career in 1985 as a Kabataang Barangay chair in Barangay Immaculate Conception, Quezon City. He was elected city councilor in 1992, and was vice mayor in 1995-1998.

In 1998, he ran for mayor but lost to Ismael Mathay Jr. He was then appointed commissioner at large of the National Youth Commission under former President Joseph Estrada. In 2001, Bautista successfully regained his current post of vice mayor.

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Ex-world champion gives Pacquiao 50-50 chance

SPECIAL PRAYER: A priest blesses Manny Pacquiao during Sunday Mass in California.

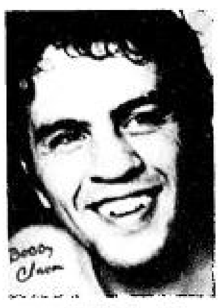
By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—This will sound absurd in Manila, but three-time former world boxing champ Bobby Chacon says Philippine national treasure Manny Pacquiao has only a 50-50 chance of winning his monumental showdown with Erik Morales in Las Vegas on March 19.

Chacon, a countryman of Morales, could be biased. But this bland view should also help put the odds in the Pacquiao-Morales fight on a more realistic plain.

There's a sentiment sweeping Manila in the run-up to the showdown that says Pacquiao would win by knockout inside six rounds.

A look at the respective records of the two combatants starting in 2002 shows Pacquiao indeed has a clear edge in the KO department.



CHACON: Morales is also a good fighter.

Morales has stopped only three of his eight foes, while losing two bouts in that span.

Pacquiao has demolished all but one of his seven opponents in the same period, the only escapee being Juan Manuel Marquez who eked out a draw after suffering three knockdowns in the opening round.

Also, Pacquiao knocked out Marco Antonio Barrera in November 2003, while Morales was beaten by Barrera last November.

The figures are clear, but championship boxing happens to be ruled by an intricate, more exacting equation.

For example: Would Pacquiao be on equal footing when he intrudes into the 130-lb backyard, a very familiar turf to Morales, who stands a couple of inches taller than the Filipino *conquistador*?

No clear edge for Pacquiao, explained veteran cutman Lenny de Jesus, who will again work for the

EX-WORLD/ A26

Word war erupts over gloves

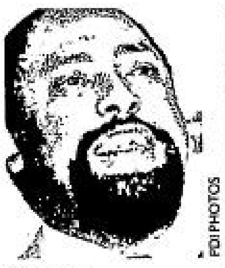
INTERNATIONAL promoter Murad Muhammad yesterday vehemently denied that he had "sold out" when he signed a contract that allowed the use of Winning gloves, Erik Morales' preferred brand, for the March 19 showdown with Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas.

Murad was reacting to charges that he had signed for the use of the thicker Japan-made gloves to the disadvantage of Pacquiao, who has been using the thinner Cleto Reyes brand since he started fighting in the US in 2001.

On Saturday, Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach said Murad agreed to the use of Winning, which would give Morales the edge, "without consulting anybody."

Murad, however, exploded when informed of the charges, carried on the Internet, that he had sold Pacquiao cheap.

Upon learning that the Internet story was written by Winchell Campos, a Team Pacquiao insider, Murad went livid.



MURAD

ROACH

FDI PHOTOS

"Murad claimed that Campos was someone who left his country and traded the Philippines for the US," Ronnie Nathanielsz wrote in a dispatch to the Manila Standard yesterday.

"Murad said Campos is now sowing dissension within the Pacquiao camp, just days before the crucial, defining fight of Pacquiao's career."

Explained Murad: "Do you for a moment think that I would do this to Pacquiao, a fighter whom we have built to become the greatest little man who ever came to the shores of North America? This is ludicrous. I would never allow my fighter to be disadvantaged."

Murad added Morales "will never beat us no matter what gloves they wear because Manny is going to win that fight."

"The gloves are incidental," he said. "My goal was to get Erik Morales and Manny will win whether he uses Everlast, Winning, Reyes or any other gloves."

Campos, formerly with the Manila Times, who has fed Manila with vital details on Pacquiao's training here, has reportedly moved into the Pacquiao apartment.

He had actually tried to keep the gloves issue from the media, apparently to maintain peace

WORD/ A26

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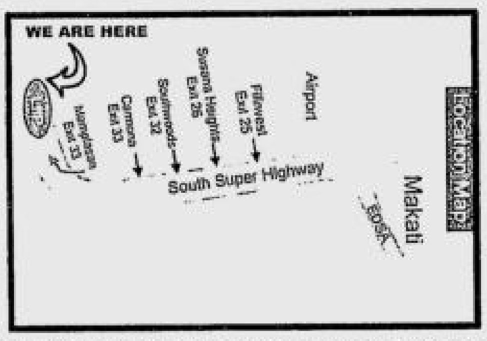

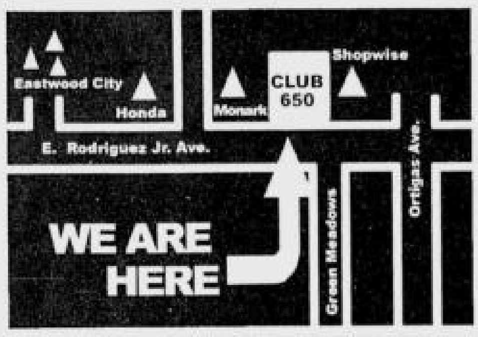

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Manny also shooting for IBA title

ALTHOUGH the major boxing bodies have not sanctioned this Sunday's mammoth Pacquiao-Morales confrontation, the fringe organization International Boxing Association (IBA) has stepped up and announced that it has backed the 12-round showdown.

Reports coming from Las Vegas said Pacquiao has already paid a sanction fee to the American-based IBA and that its representatives will be at ringside for the fight.

If Pacquiao beats Morales, he will be crowned IBA 130-lb (jr lightweight) champ.

The IBA has reportedly chosen not to deal with Morales' promoters, Top Rank, meaning the title will remain vacant if Morales wins.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Ex-world champion . . .

From page A25

Filipino's corner in the big fight.

Just like the drooling, battle-beaten Chacon, De Jesus of Puerto Rico believes Pacquiao has a 50-50 shot at triumph.

"Manny may be in the finest condition of his life," but Morales is going to be "a tough cookie to beat in his home turf," De Jesus said.

De Jesus made no open claim that Pacquiao's chances of winning by decision are quite slim, but he observed that Top Rank promoter Bob Arum, who handles Morales, enjoys a vast influence around Las Vegas, mainly with the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

De Jesus called Pacquiao a "Little Tyson," but quickly explained Morales is "a solid 29-year-old in his prime and enjoys the home-turf advantage."

Pacquiao had been initially pegged the favorite but the booking line odds in Las Vegas started to level off yesterday, obviously fueled by signs that the showdown has the solid shades of a "Frazier-Ali" remake.

Pacquiao could be expected to come out blazing *a la* Frazier, while Morales could dominate, Ali-like, with his edge in craft, experience and cunning.

Curiously, while Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach continued to insist that, regardless of the judges and referees, his man would stop Morales—a feeling shared by the *masa* in Manila—there are other noted Filipino boxing figures who share the views of Chacon and De Jesus.

Rex "Wakee" Salud, who has produced a total of three world champions, calls it even and predicts a very exciting fight. He was at ringside when Pacquiao boxed Marquez last May but has to attend the March 19 Oriental title defense of his ward, Rev Santillan, in Japan.

Cebu-based sports patron Tony Aldeguer is praying for an early Pacquiao win but also feels the protagonists enjoy even chances of winning.

Boxing scholar Hermie Rivera has also cautioned Manila fans against being carried away by native sentiments as he asked Pacquiao to dig hard into the body in order to sway the even odds in his favor.

Bobby Chacon, shaky and aided by a plumpish lady in jeans, could not make a choice after having scrutinized Pacquiao while sparring last week.

"Good, fast," Chacon said of Pacquiao.

Does he pick him over Morales?

"No, Morales also very good," Chacon explained, and proceeded to join trainer Roach, with whom he had clashed in one of the bruising bouts that the peppery Mexican legend had in ruling three world divisions—featherweight, junior lightweight and lightweight.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao again received special blessings from the pastor, Rev. Antonio Cacciopuoti, at the Christ the King Church, four blocks from his rented apartment, when he heard Sunday Mass for the second straight week yesterday.

He later honored a luncheon at the Barrio Fiesta in Glendale, tendered by San Francisco realtor Norman Valdellon and his wife.

Pacquiao, who said he did not pray for a win but only for a strong, respectable showing against Morales, was scheduled to drive to Las Vegas Monday after a brief three-round sparring at the Wild Card gym.

Word war erupts over gloves

From page A25

in the Pacquiao camp.

Roach said the Reyes gloves are "a puncher's gloves and power registers," while the Winning gloves are "softer and thicker" and should suit the needs of Morales, who "must have bad hands and wants more padding on the gloves."

Murad was expected in Las Vegas Monday to receive Team Pacquiao.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao himself has reportedly revealed he had spent almost P2 million on airline tickets, hotel accommodation and ringside tickets for guests he had invited.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo is expected to arrive in Las Vegas two days before the fight, while a host of other personalities from Manila are also expected at ringside on March 19. *Recah Trinidad*

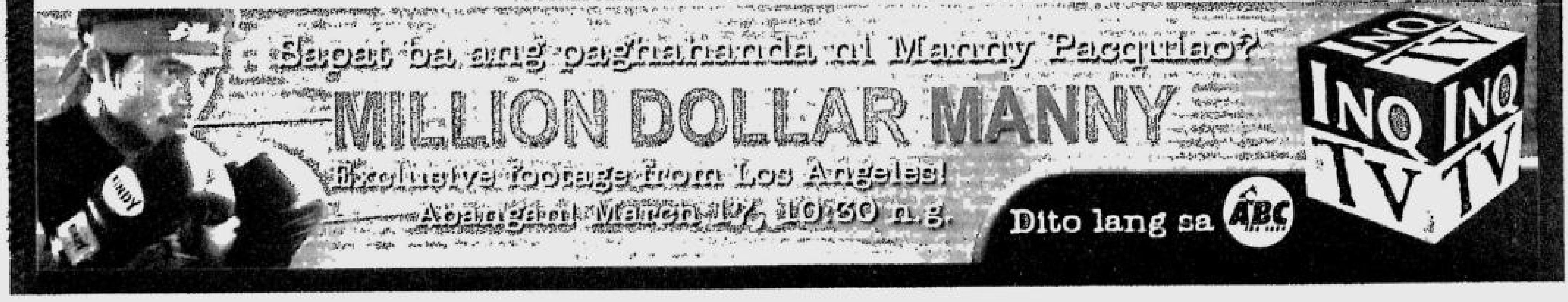
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, March 15, 2005

SINO ANG BABANGGA SA GINEBRA?
PBA
ABC iba tayo
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
ASTIG!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Gatekeepers (5:10 PM)	Gundam Seed (5:35PM)	The Road To Stardom	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Til Death Do Us Part	Bora			Insider
NBN		Taiwan/ Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		MMDA On The Road		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Family Rosary Crusade		Paco Park Presents		Auto Focus	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	KNN	Anime Ring Kasho		Anime Ring Kasho		Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Race Hour	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Tyler Hungry Heart	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Full House	Stairway To Heaven	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Malcolm In The Middle	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	David Blaine		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		Mosconi Cup					IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
Solar		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxtel	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC				The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace		One Tree Hill		The O.C		Tonight Show With Jay Leno			
Cinema One		Banyo Queen				Drama Studio: Akin Ang Pangarap Mo				Mr. Suave				Cine Tonight: Ang Tanging Ina				Antonia Part 1	
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Angel			Smallville		News Central	Oprah		The Men's Room
AXN		CSI: Miami				Fear Factor		Samurai X	Samurai X	Andromeda (Season III)		The Contender		When Animals Attack		The Amazing Race 5		Maximum Exposure	
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Charmed		Wild Card		Miss Match		Friends	Charmed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News		World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Interpol Investigates		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wow		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
Solar Sports		Copenhagen Masters: Eng vs. China		RP-Taiwan 0 Ball Chall: Manalo vs. Yang				2005 All England Badminton Semi-Finals		GWS ep.8-2005			NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Lakers @ Washington					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fixx	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert							Back To Basics		
HBO				Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights		Almost A Woman (5:15 PM)			The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King (6:45 PM)							Six Feet Under 37 Death Works Overtime		The Phantom (10:50PM)	
Star Movies			Dick (3:45 PM)				Dick Tracy			Down With Love (7:15 PM)				Nine Months			Bottle Rocket (10:45PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Mr. T-	Josie And The Pussycats	The Superfriends	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN		FA Cup Highlights		Acc Basketball Tour Washington, DC USA (Quarter)				Acc Basketball Tour Washington, DC USA (Quarter)				Sportscenter Asia	2004 Women's Trick Shot Magic CT USA		Acc Basketball Tour Washington, DC USA (C'ships)				
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/ Untalkative Bunny	Eddie's Million Dollar Cook-Off			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	An American Tail II: Fievel Goes West	
Cinemax	Dead Heat (2:45 PM)				The Cradle Will Fall			Gold Diggers: The Secret Of Bear Mountain			Hercules And The Lost Kingdom			Maverick				Secretary (11:05PM)	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	The Mystery Of Natalie Wood				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Just Cause		The Mystery Of Natalie Wood			Missing (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
Sports Plus				Pac10 Wildcard (2nd Pick) Rog					Porsche md 11&12	Asian Motocross '04 Review			Arena Football: Chicago @ Grand Rapids						Bikini Destination
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	We Are One Body	Web Of Faith	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.


Sapat ba ang paghahanda ni Manny Pacquiao?
MILLION DOLLAR MANNY
Exclusive footage from Los Angeles!
Abangan! March 17, 10:30 n.g.
Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV

Full SEA Games launching rites today

By Jasmine W. Payo

THERE isn't any reason the 2005 Southeast Asian Games won't push through.

The Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee (Philsoc) stressed yesterday that it aims to allay any fears on the country's lack of preparation to host the biennial meet slated Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

"We are committed to hold the Games," said Pete Cura, Philsoc marketing head. "As far as money is concerned, we are on track. We have an aggressive marketing program going on."

Philsoc will unveil the Games' sponsors, logo, mascot and other marketing programs at 12 noon today at the Dragon Gate Restaurant on Roxas Boulevard.

Only Globe Telecoms, which secured a P100-million Gold Package, has been presented as a major sponsor.

Last week, Philsoc sealed P345 million worth of sponsorship packages from top corporations, a day after Malacañang approved the release of P300 million to help meet the P800 million to P1 billion budget needed for the operational requirements of the event.

"We're confident that we'll meet the quota," said Philsoc marketing committee official Boy Santiago. "If we did it before in 1991, I don't see why we can't do it now."

The country successfully hosted the Games in 1991 but finished just a gold shy of bagging the overall title.

Santiago added, however, that the marketing launch will also focus on the national athletes and showcase the game venues.

"The highlight of the event will be the audio-visual presentation of the venues all over the country," said Santiago. "It will show the commitment of the local government units and also the commitment of the athletes to perform well in the Games."

Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez is also hoping that today's launch would unite the sports officials.

"This is really a challenge for fellow sports leaders," said Ramirez. "It's a test of unity for us."

Leviste tops SEAG qualifier

ANTOINETTE Leviste is congratulated by Sony Ericsson GM Dennis Manzano (center) and POC president Jose Cojuangco.

OLYMPIAN Antoinette Leviste guided Globe Platinum Leap of Faith to victory in the Sony Ericsson SEA Games Team Qualifier event over the weekend at the Alabang Country Club.

The two-day Sony Ericsson Showjumping Classic was the first of four qualifying meets to select the members of the Philippine Equestrian team to the Southeast Asian Games.

Leviste clocked 41.64 seconds with four faults in the jump-off, nipping Asian Games gold medalist Mikaela "Mikee" Cojuangco-Jaworski, on Luisita (45.23 seconds, eight faults).

Sixteen-year-old Joker A. Arroyo, aboard Without A Doubt, finished a fighting third.

Leviste and Jaworski went head-to-head in the first day on the Sony Ericsson 1.25 meter class, with Leviste submitting a quicker time on Globe Platinum Leap of Faith with no faults, followed by Cojuangco-Jaworski on Rustic Rouge and Luisita.

Winning their respective classes were Gaby Herbosa on Starburst in the Metro Magazine 0.85 meters and Mateo Lorenzo on Buddy in the Globe Platinum 0.95m. Diego Lorenzo won twice, on Intrigue in the Globe Platinum 1.05m and on Bailey in the Sony Ericsson 1.15 m.

In the second day of competition organized by Equisport Concepts, Inc., Natalie Zani on Geronimo ruled the Metro Magazine 0.95m, Diego Lorenzo on Bailey topped the Globe Platinum 1.05m class and Bea Rocha captured The Globe Platinum 1.15m on Nazli.

High school senior Daniella Virata on Daydream topped the Sony Ericsson 1.25m class.

Bigger cast seen in 2nd Epson Cup

EPSON Cup 2 has attracted hundreds of badminton enthusiasts after holding its leveling sessions over the weekend at the Pioneer Badminton Center in Mandaluyong City.

Tournament chair Edmin Tarriela expects the number to increase with another pair of leveling schedules slated on March 19 and 20.

"We're hoping to surpass the number of participants during the first Epson Cup," said Epson marketing manager Randy Kanapi.

The inaugural season of the Epson Cup drew more than 500 players, including show business personalities and other celebrities.

Sanctioned by the Philippine Badminton Association, Epson Cup 2 will be held on April 9-17, with qualifying rounds at the Olympic Badminton Club in Libis, Quezon City.

The semifinals and finals of the nine-day event sponsored by Shell, Wilson, Philippine Daily Inquirer and Citibank will be held at the Greenhills Badminton Center in San Juan.

Registration fee is pegged at P500.

For inquiries, call 638-5343, 746-0828.

Less playing time for ace Barako guard

JIMWELL Torion's playing time has drastically diminished.

A consistent starter, the Red Bull Barako playmaker is now the third option behind Warren Ybañez and Topex Robinson in the rotation.

But the Cebuano enforcer, who, for a time, has been a common fixture in the PBA's suspension list, isn't complaining.

"Sitting on the bench most of the time is a challenge for me," said Torion. "I have to prove my worth in practice and during the games and no amount of distraction can stop me from doing it."

With Ybanez and Robinson getting a lion's share of the playing time, Torion has so far logged in a total of 26 minutes in three games, averaging 1.3 points.

"Our goal is to be the No. 1 fastbreaking team in the league," said Guiao, whose Barako are currently tops in fastbreak points and assists.

"I guess Jimwell is trying to re-learn the process again."

June Navarro

SPORTSWATCH

PCU is NCAA overall champion

PHILIPPINE Christian University edged San Sebastian College and College of St. Benilde to seize the overall crown of the 2004-05 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) season. Boosted by unprecedented victories in basketball, volleyball, table tennis and beach volleyball, the Taft-based Dolphins edged San Sebastian College and St. Benilde in the overall standings. "We're very happy. It's a milestone for the school to be adjudged as the overall champion in the NCAA," said PCU president Dr. Oscar S. Suarez. Athletic director Alfredo Olano said the Dolphins' success resulted from the cooperation between the school administration and the students. PCU also finished runner-up in men's beach volleyball and men's table tennis and third overall in the men's volleyball, men's swimming, men's chess, men's athletics and men's lawn tennis.

JVC launches regional badminton in 4 cities

GIANT electronics firm JVC will stage the first JVC regional championships beginning April 18 in Pampanga with Cebu, Davao and Bacolod hosting the three other legs. "There are many untapped talents in the provinces, so by holding these regional tournaments, we hope to discover, train and develop them," said Kazue Salud, general manager of JVC. The JVC regionals, backed by Gosen, Cebu Pacific, Water Front Hotels, Lactacyd and organized by IMG, will have the elite division, the junior category (16-under) plus the intercollegiate team championships. Events on tap in the elite are the men's and ladies singles, the men's and ladies doubles and the mixed doubles. For inquiries, call 0918-5094845, 0921-3142001 or 0917-5288970 or e-mail jvcbadminton@hotmail.com.

Salim fights Thai for PABA title in Bangkok

TALL and lanky Reman Salim of SGG Stable faces undefeated Thai hero Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym in a 12-round fight today for the Pan-Asian Boxing Association crown in Bangkok, Thailand. The once-beaten Salim (8-1, 2 KOs) will go into the fight a slight underdog against Poonsawat (20-0, 15 KOs), a stocky 24-year-old fighter who is ranked no. 1 and mandatory challenger to newly crowned WBA champ Wladimir Sidorenko. Poonsawat counts 13 Filipino victims in his resume, among them Salim's stablemate Johnny Lear who was stopped in two rounds.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Corteza on target for SMB 9-Ball Tour slot

LEE Vann Corteza posted two straight victories yesterday to lead the cast in the winners' bracket of the San Miguel Beer Asian 9-Ball Qualifier at Coronado Lanes in Makati City. Corteza hacked out a 7-6 victory over Troy Danao before downing Romeo del Rosario via a similar count. The top two finishers in the event organized by Puyat Sports head Aristeo G. Puyat and sanctioned by Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) will join seeded players Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Gandy Valle in the second leg of the Tour slated next month in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

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Winds to test 40 select pros

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, Laguna—Carito Villaroman knows what it takes to win the P5-million The Country Club Invitational.

He just needs to make the cut first.

The third edition of the richest local professional tournament tees off this week with a select field of 40 playing one of the toughest tests in golf.

The 36-year-old Villaroman ended the 2004 season with two wins, and will come into this tourney trying to get the first thing done before thinking of winning again—make the 36-hole cut.

"I've never made the cut here," Villaroman said during a break in practice yesterday at the windswept The Country Club layout. "I find it difficult playing this course, especially with the wind blowing hard."

Villaroman, who won the ITT Invitational Pro-Am and another 36-hole tournament at the Mimosa last December, believes that an eight-under, four-day total will surely win the top P1.1 million prize in the event that gets going Thursday.

Antonio Lascuña is the defending champion. His four-under 276 last year left Angelo Que in second place, two strokes behind.

The field faces a stiffer test if the course is again reduced to a par-70 for the tournament.

World paralympic champ due

MARKLEIN: 111 marathons

SEOUL World Paralympic Games six-gold medal winner and European handycycling champion Errol Marklein of Germany will visit Manila on March 30-31 to conduct clinics on wheelchair racing, basketball and handycycling in cooperation with Philspada (Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled).

Marklein, whose injury in a car accident at age 18 forced him to take up sports as part of his rehabilitation, has competed in four World Paralympic Games.

He took up basketball, swimming, table tennis and archery but it was in athletics, particularly wheelchair racing, where he excelled.

After three Paralympic Games and eight years of hard work and determination, he won a record six golds in the 1988 Seoul Paralympics, using a wheelchair racing equipment he himself designed.

Now 48, Marklein has so far completed 111 marathons and won the New York Marathon (wheelchair category) in 1994.

Marklein, vice president for advance product development of Sunrise Medical, which distributes sports wheelchairs worldwide, still competes in the European handycycling circuit.

Marklein's visit is part of the Papgoc's (Philippine Asean Paragames Organizing Committee) efforts to drum up interest in the 3rd Asean Paragames in Manila this December.

A poem masquerading as a movie

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

YOU want to read a poem by merely watching a movie?

Go watch "Million Dollar Baby."

The film did not only win four Oscar awards—Best Director (Clint Eastwood), Best Actress (Hilary Swank), Best Supporting Actor (Morgan Freeman) and Best Picture. It also won hearts, including mine.

You talk of subtlety at its best, "Million Dollar Baby" is for you.

You talk of scarcity of words and more of movement, action and life's juices to drive home a point, "Million Dollar Baby" is for you.

You talk of rhythm, symmetry amid helter-skelter, "Million Dollar Baby" is for you.

But if you want a story spoon-fed to you from beginning to end, then "Million Dollar Baby" is not for you.

You want a movie with a typical Hollywood ending—commercial to the hilt—"Million Dollar Baby" is not for you.

This film does not tell it all. It wants you to finish the story yourself.

Clint Eastwood makes sure you use your head, not just your eyes, while watching his movie.

This is golf, not jogging.

This is not the bedtime story stuff. It does not lullaby you to sleep.

You are lazy to think, skip this movie. Watch TV Patrol.

OK, you want an undisturbed sleep—air-con and all—go watch the movie.

By choice, the quietness, serenity if you will, of the film could put you to eternal rest like a lethal injection does to a death convict.

Someone said to me a while ago that virtually all endings are sad.

I agree, particularly in true-to-life stories.

A marriage ends, not necessarily because of breakup, but because one partner dies.

A love ends, not necessarily because of an affair, but because one partner dies or leaves the nest.

A friendship ends, not necessarily because of that saying "familiarity breeds contempt," but because a partner gets himself stabbed in the back by his/her own friend for the flimsiest of reasons.

An employment ends, not necessarily because an employee had a fight with his/her boss, but because one gets retired in accordance with company policy or, worst, that he/she gets fired mainly on the whims and caprices of the boss.

Yes, I believe that, almost always, every ending is sad.

I might even cry a river when it's time for me to leave the INQUIRER, who knows?

Life is like that: It brings you both sadness and happiness but in the end, it's really all sadness. And, the bitter truth about it is, mostly, the sadness is man-made.

That is why I've always liked the saying, "It's in the falling, not in the rising."

The marginalized keep on falling but in the process, the lessons will teach them to keep on fighting, if only to rise. Not necessarily rise up in arms but, rather, to meet the challenge, overcome the debacle no matter the odds.

That is why the filthy rich, more than anybody else, ought to see this film. For to them, it seems the artist is non-existent and they never seem to care, realize, that the artist (coming mainly from the poor, oppressed folk) is, at most times, the most misunderstood person on earth.

In "Million Dollar Baby," there's a gym poster there that says: "Winners always want to do anything that losers won't."

Discipline and the will to win, that's what you'll come to know about "Million Dollar Baby," a story not just about boxing but also about life.

For a change, go watch it. It might change your outlook in life—to the moneyed, especially.

***

FASTBREAK. My condolence goes to Ermin Garcia Jr. whose mother, Paulita Fernandez-Garcia, died in the US on Sunday. Ermin took over as publisher of The Sunday Punch when his father, Ermin Garcia Sr., was gunned down in the Sixties while in pursuit of his principled performance of his duty as publisher/editor in chief of the multi-awarded community newspaper from Dagupan City... Tom Garcia said the Padpao Golf Tournament in honor of Gen. Aglipay will be held on March 31 at Aguinaldo. My buddy, Gen. Bob Santiago, will be more than glad to host you, Tom, including your associates at Padpao.

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*Not included in the LPG Tankito Promo

Holy Week

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0612, Series of 2005

Big show by Antonio in NCA tilt

PROMINENT cockfighter Patrick Antonio did not disappoint his legion of fans last week when he emerged solo champion in the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum. Antonio's entry, Complexor 3000, posted six wins and one draw to win the title, while his other bet, Complexor 3000 Firefly 14, bagged runner-up honors. It was Antonio's second derby championship so far in the NCA 2005 circuit. Antonio fielded his prized gamebirds from Sagupaan Gamefarms and Zamboanga Farms of Primallion Brothers. "The proven training and conditioning system of Sagupaan did it again," said Antonio. Meanwhile, the next NCA derby sizzles on April 5 and 7 with Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando, Madlambayan Brothers, John Capinpin and Ruel Feliciano as hosts. Screening of cockerels intended for the stagfighting season in September is ongoing. For inquiries, call 911-3101 and 911-2928.

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Race 8—1. Loose Cannon 2. Manileño 3 Fine Offer 4. She Jinsky 5. El Cid 6 Mighty Dragon

Lions playing in PBL under Nenaco fold

NEGROS Navigation Corporation (Nenaco) yesterday declared its intention to join the Philippine Basketball League using the core of the San Beda Lions for the season-opening Unity Cup.

Nash Racela, the assistant coach of Eric Altamirano at Coca-Cola in the Philippine Basketball Association, is expected to handle the team with Mike Advani, a former Lion who also played for Ginebra in the pro league, as team manager.

Although the giant shipping corporation has yet to comply with all the requirements, the PBL is expected to accept the new team following the recent decision by Ateneo-Addict Mobile and La Salle ICTSI to beg off from the tournament.

The Unity Cup starts on April 2 with Magnolia Dairy Ice Cream hoping to retain the title it won at the expense of Welcoat Paints last year.

Led by Yousuf Al Jamal and high-leaping Jerome Paterno, Nenaco's participation will boost San Beda's bid to end its long title drought in the NCAA.

Meanwhile, Harbour Centre is hoping to sign up La Salle star Mark Cardona to boost its title campaign.

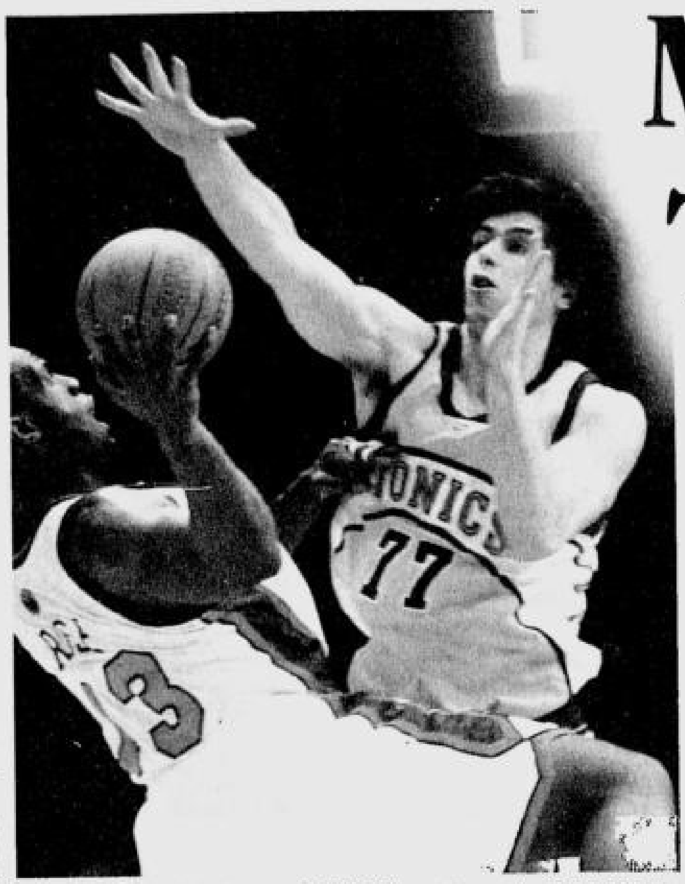
The 6-foot guard has been practicing with Welcoat Paints but experts feel he would eventually play his last amateur tournament with Harbour Centre because of the La Salle connection.

Former pro Tonichi Yturri will call the shots for Harbour Centre with Derek Pumaren as team consultant. Former PBA Rookie of the Year winner Gil Cortez has been designated as team manager.

Aside from Magnolia, Welcoat, Nenaco, Harbour Centre, other teams participating in the Unity Cup are Toyota Otis-Letran, Granny Goose, Air Philippines and Montaña Pawnshop.

Sources said businessman Homer Go, a manufacturer of plastic pipes, also wants to join the league but his application faces rough sailing because he wants his squad to carry his name. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Mavericks lick Timberwolves



SONICS' Vladimir Radmanovic (77) foils an attempt by Knicks' Malik Rose in the fourth quarter of the game won by the Sonics. REUTERS

MINNEAPOLIS—Jason Terry scored 12 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and dished out 12 assists for the Dallas Mavericks, who pulled away from the Minnesota Timberwolves in a 102-93 victory on Sunday.

Dirk Nowitzki added 21 points and 10 rebounds, while reserve Marquis Daniels scored 11 of his 16 points in the fourth, and Josh Howard finished with 15 points. Dallas went 12-for-13 from the free throw line in the final period after going 8-for-16 over the first three.

Kevin Garnett finished with 24 points, 13 rebounds and six assists for the Timberwolves, while Trenton Hassell had 19 points and eight rebounds.

At Sacramento, California, Tracy McGrady scored 22 points and David Wesley added 21 to help the Rockets win their fourth straight, 111-96, at the Kings' expense.

Reserve Mike James added 20 points and Yao Ming scored 17 as Houston ended an 11-game losing streak in Sacramento. The Rockets hadn't won in Arco Arena since a 107-93 victory on March 28, 1999.

At Los Angeles, Elton Brand scored six of his 20 points in the final 2 1/2 minutes and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Clippers, who beat the Chicago Bulls, 83-78.

At Toronto, Donyell Marshall tied the NBA record with 12 3-pointers and the Toronto Raptors finished with a league-record 21 following a 128-110 win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Marshall was 12-for-19 from 3-point range and finished with a career-high 38 points to help the Raptors set a franchise record for points. *AP*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Dallas 102, Minnesota 93; LA Clippers 83, Chicago 78; Houston 111, Sacramento 96; Toronto 128, Philadelphia 110; New Jersey 98, Orlando 82; Seattle 90, New York 80; Boston 105, Washington 101; Detroit 64, Utah 62; Cleveland 98, Indiana 86; Phoenix 106, Denver 101.

Cardona joining 2005 PBA draft

By Dennis U. Eroa
Inquirer Libre Sports Editor

THE BIGGEST names in amateur basketball looked headed to take separate routes in their promising careers.

La Salle star Mac Cardona yesterday confirmed that he's no longer going to play his fifth and last year of eligibility with La Salle and will try his luck in the 2005 PBA draft.

"I'll miss La Salle so much, but turning pro will also boost my family financially," Cardona , 23, told the INQUIRER.

Cardona's sudden change of mind came as a surprise to La Salle and his fans. He endeared himself to La Salle supporters after publicly announcing that he's coming back this year moments after the Green Archers edged Far Eastern University during last year's UAAP finals at the riotous Araneta Coliseum.

Manny Salgado, La Salle's assistant team manager and ICTSI-Archer board member in the PBL, said that he wished Cardona the best of luck in his new endeavor.

"La Salle isn't going to prevent him (Cardona) from turning pro. He's old enough to decide what he thinks is good for him. Good luck to him," said Salgado.

Like Cardona, Arwind Santos is also predicted to be picked in the first round of the draft. But the 6-foot-4 Santos hasn't decided to join the pro bandwagon yet.

Santos' presence is crucial as the Tamaraws try to regain their UAAP title in the coming season.

But Dondon Monteverde, Santos' manager, said he will convince the Lubao, Pampanga, native to follow Cardona's example.

"Turning pro doesn't mean that he is no longer going to finish his college education. Arwind has nothing more to prove in the amateurs," said Monteverde.

MVP: Terence Tang shows his trophy and medals for being the MVP, best defensive player and making it to the Mythical Five with an average of 30.3 points and 14.7 rebounds per game in the Bobby Littaua division of the Ateneo Basketball League. He powered Team Novales to the title.

Russian wave rises; Federer wins

BELGIAN Kim Clijsters stretches to return to Anna Chakvetadze. AFP

INDIAN WELLS, California—The Russian assault on women's tennis continued unabated on Sunday at the Indian Wells WTA/ATP Masters Series tournament.

With six of the top 10 seeds, and 13 entries in the draw, it is likely that a Russian will make a serious challenge at the $4.8 million hardcourt tournament.

Not only did 2004 French Open runner-up Elena Dementieva and reigning US Open champ Svetlana Kuznetsova advance on Sunday but the next generation of Russian players was also on display.

Two promising young players Evgenia Linetskaya and qualifier Maria Kirilenko blasted their way into the third round with Linetskaya scoring the biggest upset over French world number two Amelie Mauresmo, 2-6, 6-2, 7-5.

Kuznetsova breezed past Maria Vento-Kabchi, 6-2, 6-1, but Dementieva was given a scare against France's Severine Beltrame before prevailing, 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

Of the five Russians competing Sunday, Anna Chakvetadze was only one to lose, falling 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) to unseeded Kim Clijsters, of Belgium.

World number one Roger Federer began his quest to defend his title by easily handling Mardy Fish, 6-3, 6-3. Second seed Lleyton Hewitt, of Australia, also advanced, beating American Robby Ginepri, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2). *AFP*

Els triumphs; Padraig scores

DOHA, Qatar—Ernie Els won his second straight event in the Middle East, rallying to take the Qatar Masters by one shot after firing a 7-under 65 in the final round on Sunday.

Els finished with a 12-under 276 after making seven birdies to come back from a 5-shot deficit and edge Henrik Stenson of Sweden at the Doha Golf Course. Stenson shot a 71.

Meanwhile, Ireland's Padraig Harrington fired a nine-under 63 to grab a share of the Honda Classic lead on Sunday, then won a playoff against Vijay Singh and Joe Ogilvie to claim his first title on the US PGA Tour at the Palm Beach Gardens. *AFP, AP*

Vindication

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THERE are few people in sports and business I admire more than Hermie Esguerra and his staff at Herma Group. They inspire ordinary people like me because they are honest, efficient, hard-working and, in the case of Hermie, over-generous in his judgment of character, always wishing the best of everyone.

Still, I am puzzled why some quarters, including the media, seem to dislike him. I simply can't understand why these people delight in criticizing him, particularly those "crime" columnists (in the words of PDI colleague Conrad Banal).

Recently, Esguerra was a victim of a vicious attack which linked him and his Herma Shipping crew to allegations of oil pilferage at the Petron depot in Pandacan. In my view, the story was not only unfair, but derogatory as well to Esguerra, a Bulacan businessman-sportsman who is held in high esteem in the community. Instead of being pilloried, shouldn't the Herma Group, composed of many young people who worked long, hard years to attain success for the company and their families, get the credit it so richly deserves? Shouldn't Esguerra receive, at the very least, a fair and objective treatment from these supposedly responsible journalists?

However, I am happy to read (in Banal's column) that the damaging report against them has been proved wrong. According to the story, Petron filed a case against Herma, alleging that the company stole from Petron some P35 million worth of fuel over five years. Petron claimed that its haulers (Herma) did not unload the entire shipment, complaining that its haulers were stealing from the oil company by retaining part of the delivery in their vessels.

Petron claimed that in one particular shipment, based on the reading of the delivered fuel at the Petron depot, Herma "stole" some 12,000 liters of fuel. But according to Banal, an official inspection of that particular Herma vessel, which was witnessed by the police and Petron officers, showed that only 1,600 liters were left in the tanker, which were the usual residue of fuel that could not be pumped out by the machines at the Petron depot.

Where did the 12,000 liters go? Why blame Esguerra's people for the snafu? Where is fairness here?

***

POLITICIANS BRINGING CHAOS TO SPORTS. Outspoken Julian Malonso, an Olympic purist and former Philippine Olympic Committee president, said there is chaos in the preparation for the coming Southeast Asian Games because "sports is in the hands of the wrong people."

The staging of the SEA Games is being handled by politicians and former men of (President) Marcos, Aquino, Ramos, Estrada and Arroyo who spend taxpayers' money for their huge allowances, salaries and travels.

Even the POC is controlled by politicians and businessmen who arrogate the prerogatives of the Olympic body. For instance, the country's basketball campaign in the Olympics, particularly the 2008 Games in Beijing, is run by a professional league, the Philippine Basketball Association.

According to Malonso, government should not control sports. The Olympic spirit should be understood otherwise we will only add more trouble to our already turbulent sports situation. The moment government interferes in sports, politicians will bring chaos. The IOC representative (Frank Elizalde) to the Philippines should look into these anomalies.

***

ALL SET FOR CAVITE BULACAN COCK DERBY. In response to an invitation from my cockfighting friends in Cavite and Bulacan, I am taking part in the "Akin ang Cavite, Sa Iyo ang Bulacan" 3-Cock Derby at the well-maintained Cavite Coliseum today.

Hosted by my *kabayan*, former Bulacan board member lawyer Pete Principe, the one-day derby is aimed at fostering sportsmanship, honesty and fair play between the cocker-breeders from Cavite and Bulacan. It is being staged in cooperation with Strike power feeds.

"This derby will be a fitting follow-up to the recent Cavite-Bulacan hackfights, an annual affair hosted by the Revilla family," said Principe, a past governor of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in Central Luzon. Bulacan cockers won this year's hackfight series.

Submission of weights for the derby will be from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. today at the Cavite Coliseum for fighting cocks weighing between 1.8 and 2.4 kg. The entry fee is P5,500 while the minimum bet is P5,500. A P300,000 prize awaits the winning participants. For details, call the Cavite Coliseum Derby Center at (046) 970-9971.

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12:35 / 2:45 / 4:55 / 7:05 / 9:15
BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00
CONSTANTINE
12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50
SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
1:30 / 3:55 / 6:20 / 8:45
DOLBY DIGITAL

ALI MALL CINEMAS

❶ CURSED
11:30 / 1:40 / 3:50 / 6:00 / 8:10
❷ HOSTAGE
12:55 / 3:25 / 5:55 / 8:25
❸ CONSTANTINE
11:20 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
❹ BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00
❺ MILLION DOLLAR BABY
11:45 / 2:30 / 5:15 / 8:00
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

ARANETA COLISEUM SHOWS

BB. PILIPINAS GRAND CORONATION NIGHT
March 19 Saturday, 8pm
RIVERMAYA & KITCHIE NADAL LIVE!
April 16 Saturday
THE CASCADES: LIVE IN MANILA
April 15 Friday, 8pm
MOSSIMO BIKINI SUMMIT 2005
April 30 Saturday

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NOW OPEN

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DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

Reader a victim of 'idea piracy'

THESE past weeks I have been brainstorming with writer/colleagues about a possible show that will have a segment paying tribute to my mom's extensive contribution to Pinoy show biz. I always get a kick out of bouncing off ideas with creative minds. But there's always a risk that your idea will be snatched away by someone else and passed off as their own.

Pirating other people's ideas is even worse than pirating CDs and DVDs. How can you ban those idea stealers from the face of the earth? I remember what my mom used to say: "Unless there's a contract already, don't give your all. You never know who to trust in this business."

That was because it happened to her once and it is still happening within the industry. As I told a colleague: "Brainstorm to no end but before you realize it your brain's output could be taken away from you, like a storm had struck!"

With that in mind, this e-mail from a reader struck me. May it serve as a wake-up call to the network people. Can't cry over spilt milk and creative juices either.

Dear Dolly,

Last week, I saw a press release in the papers that there was an upcoming show on ____ entitled "____" I was surprised when I read that because I remember that when I took the exam last November 2004 at the [station] for the promo writer position, one of the questions for the take home exam was: Present 10 name/title studies for a proposed morning TV program for housewives, etc…

I thought questions for applicants were meant to gauge the applicant's ability and only that?

Why did it have to be an upcoming television show in the first place? I don't understand. This leads me to assume that the applicants' ideas were used in order to come up with a title for the TV show.

I find this unacceptable. It's not because I'm bitter for not having been hired. I am no longer interested in the position. I just want an explanation: Why we were asked to present 10 titles for an upcoming TV show when we had

READER/ A31

NINA: raw, rare and ravishing

From page A30

not been hired! How long has this been going? How about the other questions in the exam? Were those "suggestions" also used? This is such an insult for writers who work and think hard to come up with ideas.

Now I get it: When I received a phone call for the exam, I was reminded to "invite more friends to take the Exam." In hindsight, this translated to: "Invite your friends in order for us to get more ideas. Thank you. Thank you!"

Writers deserve respect. There are such things as ethics and values. We learn these two virtues in grade school. I am disappointed that a giant network would do such a cruel thing, especially to aspiring Filipino writers. It's bad enough that it's hard to make a decent living as a writer here in the Philippines. Our ideas are gems. The last thing we need is some heartless institution is taking advantage of us.

(Name Withheld upon Request)

Can't run away

EVER since I came out with my exposé about **Cogie Domingo's** alleged lovechild-to-be with the daughter of **Pepe Smith (Felice)**, and also the legal charges of **Jeremy Marquez's** wife against him, I have been bombarded with calls/texts asking for more info. At press time, I have heard that "S-Files" and "The Buzz" might tackle both issues (they would have aired their findings last Sunday). I really hope the involved parties will be able to iron things out. It is not my intention to aggravate matters. I am just a conduit. Like any true show biz denizen, the celebrities concerned should know that you can't keep running away from your own ghost.

Live and loud

SEEMS like people just can't get enough of **Nina**. Releasing gold and platinum-selling albums "Smile" (2003) and "Heaven" (2002), and performing the monster ballad,

READER/ A32

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For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	MILLION DOLLAR BABY	11:30, 2:30, 5:30 8:25, 11:15	PG-13
2	HOSTAGE	12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:05	R-13
3	HITCH	12:10, 2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:05	PG-13
4	CURSED	11:40, 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30	PG-13

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
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☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

CURSED PG13 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,10:00	MILLION DOLLAR BABY PG13 11:30,2:10,4:50,7:30,10:15	FINAL CUT PG13 12:30,2:30,4:30, 6:30,8:30,10:30
HITCH PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:20	LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS GP 12:30,2:50,5:10,7:30,9:50	HOSTAGE R13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15

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movie guide
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4 Hostage	2 Bukid Ay Basa	2 Reserved
5 Bukid Ay Basa	3 Constantine	
	4 Let The Love Begin	
	5 Hostage	
	6 Birhen Ng Manaoag	

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CINEMA 1
HOSTAGE
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R13

CINEMA 2
HITCH
11:50, 2:30, 5:05, 7:40, 10:10
PG13

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APRIL 9, 2005	TROY MONTERO	8:30PM
APRIL 15 & 16	CANDY PANGILINAN JOHN LAPUZ & CHOKOLEIT	8:30PM

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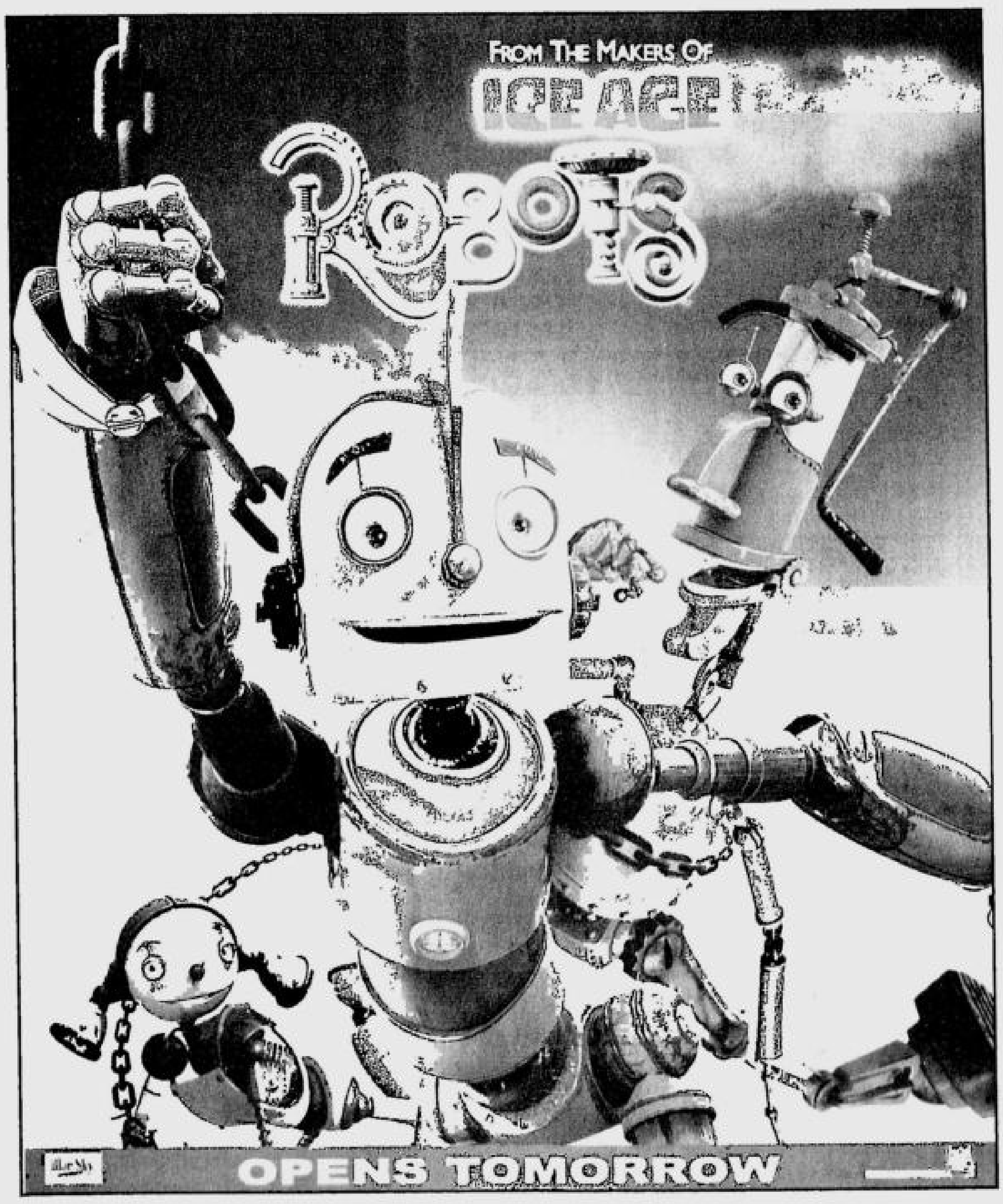

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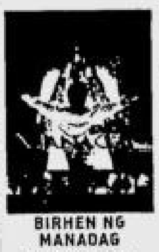
BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

CURSED
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

THE FINAL CUT
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

HOSTAGE
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

little BLACK BOOK
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

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8:35 / 10:15 LFS / 10:45 LMF / 12:20 END
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10:20 LFS / 10:50 LMF / 12:45 END
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PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
12:20 FS / 12:30 MF / 3:45 / 6:40
9:05 LFS / 9:40 LMF / 12:00 END
☎ 633-1901

sm cebu cinema 1
CONSTANTINE
12:00 FS / 12:10 MF / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10
9:10 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:30 END
☎ (032) 231-3876

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 CURSED
3 HOSTAGE
4 CONSTANTINE
5 THE FINAL CUT
6 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
7 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
8 HITCH
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 RESERVED
11 RESERVED
12 RESERVED

sm city fairview
1 BUNSHINSABA
2 DREAMBOY
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 CONSTANTINE
5 HITCH
6 INFECTION
7 HOSTAGE
8 SON OF THE MASK
9 CURSED
10 LET TEH LOVE BEGIN
11 THE AVIATOR
12 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest

sm city north edsa
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 SON OF THE MASK
3 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
4 CONSTANTINE
5 CURSED
6 HOSTAGE
7 FINAL CUT
8 HITCH

sm city manila
1 HOSTAGE
2 THE AVIATOR
3 LOVE ME IF YOU DARE smcinemaexclusive
4 HITCH
5 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
6 CONSATNTINE
7 THE FINAL CUT
8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 INFECTION
11 CURSED
12 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest

sm city sta. mesa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
5 HOSTAGE
6 SON OF THE MASK
7 CONSTANTINE
8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
9 HITCH
10 CURSED

sm city southmall
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 CONSTANTINE
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 THE AVIATOR
6 SON OF THE MASK
7 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
8 HOSTAGE
9 HITCH
10 CURSED

sm city bicutan
1 HOSTAGE
2 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 CURSED

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
2 CURSED
3 HOSTAGE
4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 SON OF THE MASK
2 GOSPEL OF JOHN smmoviefest
3 CONSTANTINE
4 HITCH
5 BUNSHINSABA
6 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest

sm city baguio
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 CONSTANTINE
3 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
4 THE AVIATOR

sm city batangas
1 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
2 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
3 GOSPEL OF JOHN smmoviefest
4 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city dasmariñas
1 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
2 HITCH
3 GOSPEL OF JOHN smmoviefest
4 SON OF THE MASK

sm city marilao
1 HITCH
2 CONSTANTINE
3 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest
4 THE AVIATOR

sm city bacoor
1 BUNSHINSABA
2 SON OF THE MASK
3 HOSTAGE
4 HITCH
5 CONSTANTINE
6 CURSED
7 THE AVIATOR
8 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest

sm city lucena
1 CONSTANTINE
2 GOSPEL OF JOHN smmoviefest
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG smmoviefest

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 CONSTANTINE
2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 THE AVIATOR
6 INFECTION
7 SON OF THE MASK
8 HOSTAGE

sm city iloilo
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 RESERVED
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 SON OF THE MASK
5 CONSTANTINE
6 INFECTION
7 RESERVED
8 ALFIE

sm city davao
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 INFECTION
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 LITTLE BLACK BOOK smcinemaexclusive
5 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
6 THE AVIATOR

sm city cagayan de oro
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 GOSPEL OF JOHN smmoviefest
3 RAY
4 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

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AYALA CINEMAS

THX

Movies/schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729-7777

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
THX 1 HOSTAGE	1 HITCH	1 SPANGLISH	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 SPANGLISH 12 50 3 30, 6 10, 8 50, 11 30	1 HOSTAGE
2 HITCH	2 HOSTAGE	2 CURSED	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 HOSTAGE 1 40 4 05, 6 30, 8 55, 11 20	2 AVIATOR
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	3 SPANGLISH	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 HITCH 12 30, 3 00, 5 30, 8 00, 10 30	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 LEMONY SNICKET'S 1 30, 3 45, 6 00, 8 15, 10 30	3 SIDEWAYS
4 CURSED	4 CURSED	4 THE FINAL CUT	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 1 10 3 45, 6 20 8 55, 11 30	4 INFECTION
5 LEMONY SNICKET'S		5 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 HITCH 1 25, 3 45, 6 05 8 25, 10 45	5
		6 HOSTAGE		
		7 MILLION DOLLAR BABY		

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 HITCH 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30
2 HOSTAGE 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
34th BPI Installment Madness March 2-28, 2005	Ansons Exhibit March 1-16, 2005	Knowledge Depot School Fair Opening March 16, 2005

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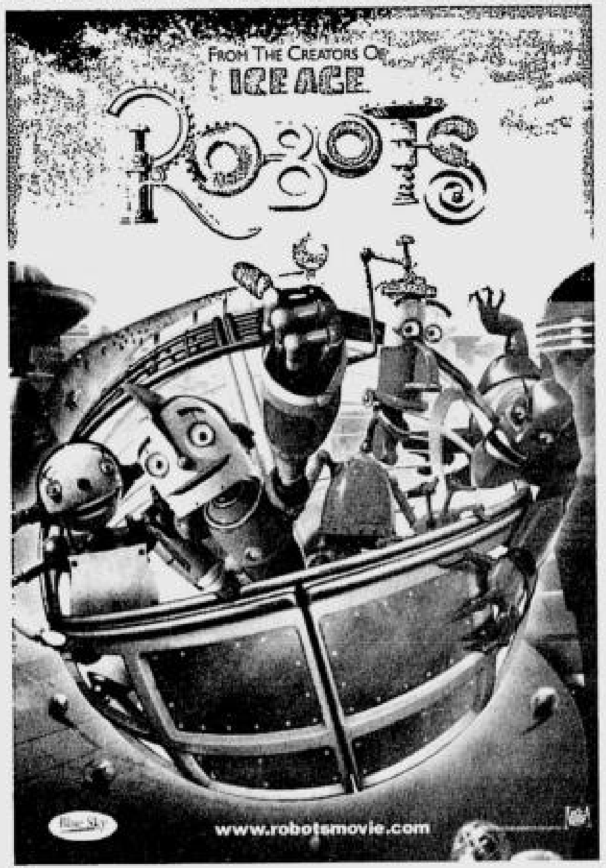

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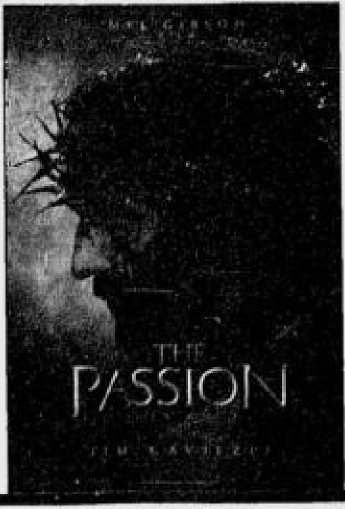
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance13
Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 yrs. old because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities.
RE-ISSUE

AYALA CINEMAS



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GALLERIA
812-9115/16

1 CONSTANTINE • THX 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	6 BIRHEN NG MANAOG 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
2 THE FINAL CUT 10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00	7 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 12:40 3:40 6:40 9:40
3 HOSTAGE 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 CURSED 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	9 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 11:00 1:50 4:40 7:30 10:00
5 HITCH 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	10 SON OF THE MASK 2 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 HOSTAGE	10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 BIRHEN NG MANAOG 10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45	5 THE FINAL CUT 10:20 12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00
3 HITCH 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	6 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 10:50 1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50
4 CURSED 10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45	7 CONSTANTINE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST
682-8193 • 682-8199

1 BIRHEN NG MANAOG 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00	5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 10:25 1:25 4:25 7:25 10:30
2 CONSTANTINE 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	6 HITCH 11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
3 SON OF THE MASK 2 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10	7 HOSTAGE 11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
4 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00	8 CURSED 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30

NOVALICHES
935-3229/31

1 HOSTAGE 10:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25	5 BUNSHINSABA 11:00 1:00 2:50 4:50 6:50 8:40
2 HITCH 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 8:55	6 BIRHEN NG MANAOG 11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:25
3 CONSTANTINE 11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25	7 RESERVE
4 CURSED 11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:25	8 RESERVE

PIONEER
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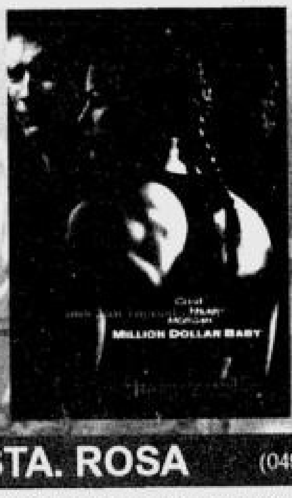
1 HITCH	3 CURSED
2 BIRHEN NG MANAOG	4 HOSTAGE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575	CAINTA 240-4661
1 SAKSI...DRIVER	1 HITCH
2 CONSTANTINE	2 BIRHEN NG MANAOG
3 BIRHEN NG MANAOG	3 CURSED
4 RACING STRIPES	4 HOSTAGE



MILLION DOLLAR BABY

77th Academy Awards
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- Best Director
- Best Actress
- Best Supporting Actor

2005 Golden Globe Awards
- Best Actress
- Best Director

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MTRCB Rating: PG-13

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907	LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	1 RAY
2 HELLWOLF	2 BIRHEN NG MANAOG
3 BUNSHINSABA	3 BUNSHINSABA
4 BIRHEN NG MANAOG	4 NIGHT JOB
5 HITCH	5 INFECTION

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416 4332	ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 BIRHEN NG MANAOG	1 HITCH
2 SAKSI...DRIVER	2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 HITCH	3 BIRHEN NG MANAOG
4 CONSTANTINE	4 SIDEWAYS
5 SON OF THE MASK 2	

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188	STARMILLS (045) 875 1077 [illegible]
1 HITCH	1 RACING STRIPES
2 BIRHEN NG MANAOG	2 BIRHEN NG MANAOG
3 BUNSHINSABA	3 BUNSHINSABA
4 CONSTANTINE	4 SIDEWAYS
5 BUKID AY BASA 2	5 SON OF THE MASK 2
6 HOSTAGE	6 HITCH

BACOLOD (034) 441 0453 (034) 441 0459	ILOILO (033) 336 8970
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	1 SON OF THE MASK 2
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	2 INFECTION
3 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS	3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 INFECTION	4 ALFIE
5 CONSTANTINE	5 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
6 MEET THE FOCKERS	6 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

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CHRISTIAN Bautista

Reader a victim of 'idea piracy'

From page A31

"I Don't Want to be Your Friend" on hitmaker **Diane Warren's** international compilation "Love Songs" this year just made pop and r&b aficionados clamor for more surprises from the soul siren. Sure enough, Nina's dropping her biggest present yet.

After countless live concert performances, Nina finally gave in to requests by her fans to put out her first live album. Recorded at Phi Restobar in hip Metrowalk, "Nina Live" captures the young diva in her element, effortlessly dishing out torch favorites music-loving golden oldies will never forget, like **Chaka Khan's** "Through the Fire" and The Eagles' "I Can't Tell You Why." Even her student and yuppie fanbase will love Nina's covers of contemporary tracks, like **Aaliyah's** "At Your Best" and **Julia Fordham's** "Love Moves in Mysterious Ways" among others. It's a mix that showcases Nina's musical tastes and versatility.

"Nina Live!" is so raw, you'd think you were there at Phi Restobar yourself, gushing over Nina and cheering all the more when her surprise guests came out and joined her for a couple of cozy duets. That's right, "Nina Live!" triples the star power with three diverse cuties.

First is heartthrob **Christian Bautista**, who makes temperatures rise with Nina on "Burn." Then balladeer **Thor** matches Nina note for note on their duet, "The Closer I Get To You." Finally, Nina gets to bust some hip-hop grooves for her delighted fans with Dice&K9's mad pup, Trapp. The duo certainly brought **Martika's** "Coloured Kisses" to a whole new level.

As an added bonus, "Nina Live!" also contains Nina's biggest single of the year so far, "I Don't Want to be Your Friend," the studio version. The track was especially written by international songwriter **Diane Warren.**

"Nina Live!" is distributed by the hitmaking label Warner Music Philippines. Grab your copies at record bars nationwide for only P280.

(For feedback, email wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com)

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

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From trailer park to $4-M mansion

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—Hilary Swank is the new Cinderella of Hollywood.

Who would ever think that a girl who grew up in a trailer park and, at age 15, lived in a car with her mother when they moved to Los Angeles would one day be a two-time Oscar Best Actress winner?

The brown-haired, brown-eyed actress from Lincoln, Nebraska, has indeed gone a long way from "just having $75 in cash, eating at mini-marts and charging it to our Mobil card." Now she lives in a $4 million four-story house in Greenwich Village, earning several millions of dollars per movie.

> 'I DON'T know what I did in this life to deserve all this'—Hilary Swank, receiving her Oscar for 'Million Dollar Baby'

SHE almost died, literally, while doing 'Baby.'

"I owe it all to my mother (Judy Swank)," she admits. "She was the one who believed in me from the very beginning. She would endlessly call up people and say, 'you have to meet my daughter, she is really talented and beautiful.' Until, miraculously, I did get myself an agent," the actress recalls with amusement.

Before "Million Dollar Baby," she went from "The Next Karate Kid" to "Boys Don't Cry," pushing herself to the limit with each role, even when it hurt.

For her performance as Maggie Fitzgerald, the rough-hewn country girl who dreamt of becoming a boxing champion in Clint Eastwood's second Oscar Best Picture winner, Hilary buffed up, gaining 19 pounds of muscle and training like a real prizefighter.

"I still have that t-shirt that said, 'I got hit by Lucia Rijker and survived,'" she discloses in reference to the boxing champion that she challenges in the movie.

Yes, she adds, laughing, "I did get occasionally hit and I can tell you that getting hit by Lucia Rijker is an interesting thing. It hurts!"

Brush with death

Unknown to many, Hilary almost died while doing the movie. She narrates: "I developed a foot blister while doing 'Baby.' Since it hurt so much, I tried to pop it myself, until a rash enveloped the wound. The doctors diagnosed me with a strain of staph bacteria which was deadly."

Hilary trained four to five hours every day, six days a week for three months. It probably helped that she is a former Junior Olympics and Washington State champion swimmer, and also ranked fifth in the same state in all-around gymnastics. "I was asked to gain 10 pounds of muscle and I ended up gaining 19 pounds. That is my job. If I'm supposed to be a boxer, I'm going to do my best to look like a boxer because that's what I need to do," she points out.

To gain all that muscle, Hilary reveals: "I was eating 210 grams of protein a day and that entailed eating every hour and a half. I was downing egg whites. I was drinking flax oil and protein shakes. I was boxing two and a half hours a day and then lifting weights an hour and a half to two hours a day. Since I have been working out so hard, I would be sleeping nine hours a night and that was too long to go without eating. So I had to wake up intermittently to drink protein shakes."

She continues: "At one point, my diet got really strict and I could take in only 50 grams of carbs a day. And just to put that in perspective, an eight-ounce glass of apple juice has 30 grams of carbs in it. I had to do this for five months. But that's what I love about my job because the whole experience afforded me to dive into another person's life, a boxer's life."

Just like Maggie

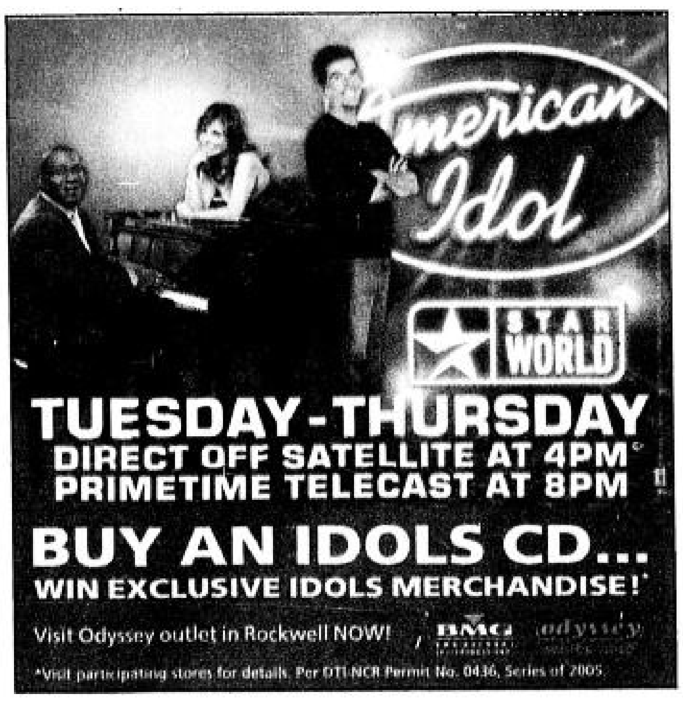
Asked whether she has maintained the lifestyle, Hilary admits, "No, I have stopped drinking those egg whites and those protein shakes.

But I am athletic, though. I like to work out. I like to exercise. It's a really integral part of my life just because I grew up an athlete."

When not acting, Hilary loves to go sky diving, river rafting and skiing.

The 30-year-old actress confesses that she easily identified with her character Maggie, who comes from nowhere and becomes someone. She discloses, "Maggie is probably one of the characters that I felt closest to because Maggie grew up in a trailer park and with not a lot. She had this dream and she felt so good boxing. She even has a line in the movie that goes, 'I never felt good doing anything else. If I don't have this, I don't have anything.' I've often felt the same way about acting."

Hilary points out one other "interesting" thing: "Maggie wants Frankie Dunn (Clint's character) to be a part of that experience and I, as an actress, always had the desire to work with Clint Eastwood, a living legend, and to do a major piece of cinema." She pauses, then says yet again, "I am just so thankful for this."



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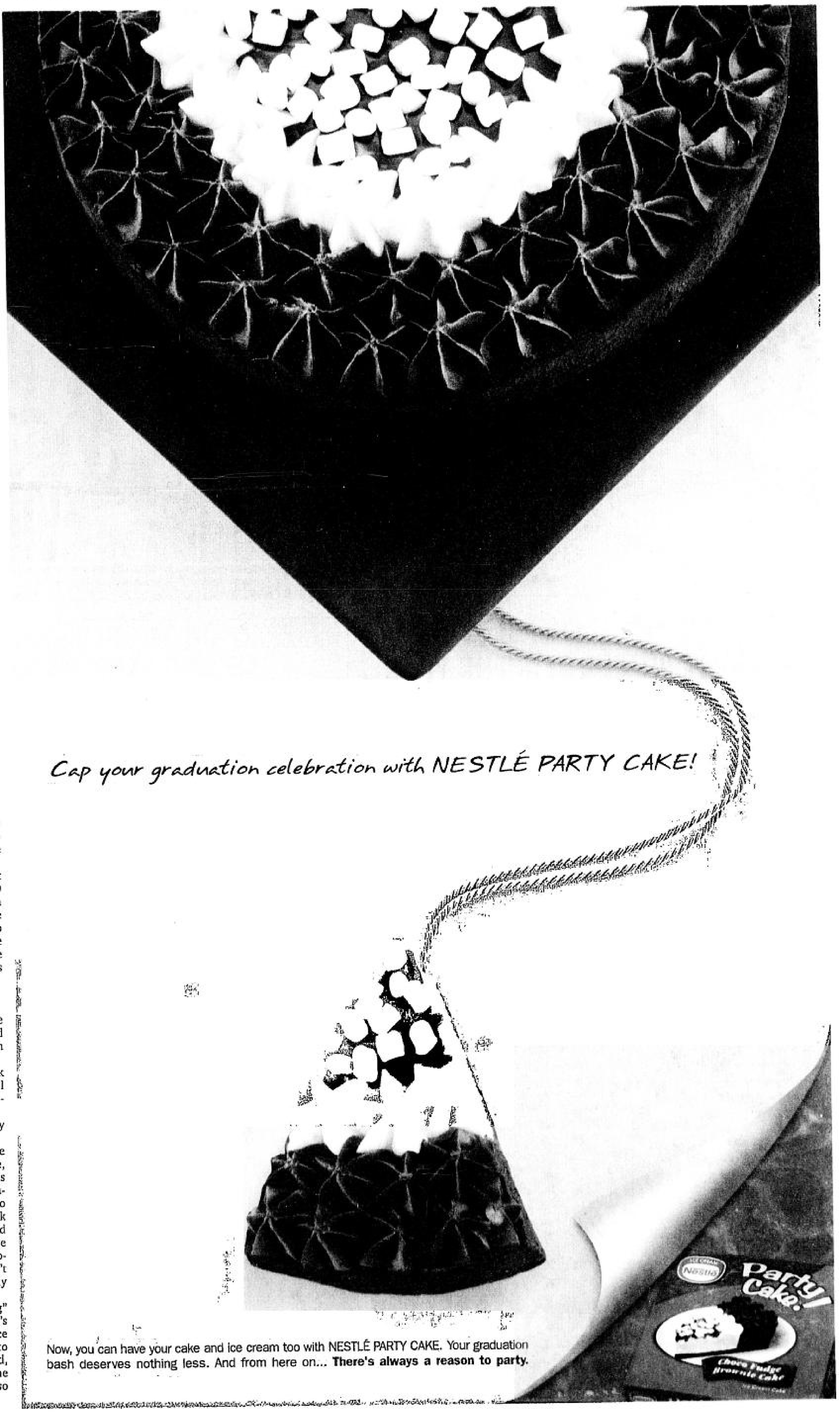

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Extensive, impressive talent search

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ANOTHER talent competition will hold its finals at 1 p.m. tomorrow at the Aliw Theater. What makes the Sterling Campus Idol Search for new singers and dancers exceptional is the impressive extent of its search process: The competition's talent scouts and audition masters went out to many schools to look for standout performers in high school and college, talents often overlooked by other singing tilts that are generally studio-based.

The roster of gifted finalists: **Camillo Villarante** of Emilio Aguinaldo College, **Almee Ruth Buzeta** of Santa Isabel College, **Tiffany Nicole Malilim** of Miriam College, **Emmanuel Quibilan** of San Beda College, **Judy Anne Manalang** of Manila Central University, **Laarnie Losala** of Philippine Women's University, **Jennifer Mansueto** of Letran College, **Rina Jane Cusi** of Western Bicutan, **Jessene Mariano** of PUP, **Marievic Gimena** of San Sebastian College;

Ma. Kristina Malabana of Sienna College, **Karen Angelica Rodriguez** of UP Manila, **Zuri Valbuena** of UP Diliman, **Mary Chimee Flores** of Jose Rizal University, **Christine Morales** of Marikina Science High School, **Ruth Enolva** of Fort Bonifacio High School, **Ian Yalung** of Sienna College, Rudestags of San Sebastian College, Yaman Lahi Dance Group of Emilio Aguinaldo College, Funky Jazz Extreme of University of Manila, and Intensive Movers of San Sebastian College.

The winners in the high school and college singing categories and the dance group category will be given a boost, and their ascent to stardom will definitely be fast-tracked. And even the non-winners will benefit from the training and exposure they're getting from the tilt.

Laughing all the way

ARE COMEDIANS born, or do they learn to laugh at life after it has put them through the psychic wringer? Here's how some of the entertainment world's most successful comics made their way to the top, laughing all the way:

WOODY ALLEN

He started as an adolescent jokesmith who supplied material for columnists and television shows. He finally experienced success as a performer in his own right with his now familiar mixture of comedic introspective, perpetual confusion and full-blown lust.

As screenwriter and performer, he made his film debut with "What's New, Pussycat" (1965), and gag-centered offerings like "Play It Again, Sam" found him a niche market.

It was the four-Oscar winner "Annie Hall" that brought his Manhattan agonizing and hapless buffoonery to an international audience.

"Manhattan" further upped the quotient of urban angst in his signature movies. His career has included self-conscious homages to **Ingman Bergman** ("Interiors") and Expressionism ("Shadows and Fog"). His controversial separation from **Mia Farrow** has not stopped his return to frivolity with "Manhattan Murder Mystery" and "Bullets over Broadway."

LUCILLE BALL

A performer since the age of 15, Ball broke into Hollywood in 1933 as one of the scantily-clad Goldwyn Girls. Her comedic gift gradually emerged through small roles in numerous musicals and comedies.

By the late '40s, she had become a popular comedienne who provided support to star comics like **Bob Hope.** With her husband **Dezi Arnaz**, she launched the radio show "My Favorite Husband," which led to the TV sitcom, "I Love Lucy," which became a big hit.

By 1960, the former movie starlet had become president of Desilu Productions, a large entertainment company with holidays that included the old RKO Studios, where she was once a mere contract player.

BILLY CRYSTAL

Raised in New York City, Crystal showed a knack for stand-up comedy before entering college. He began with a stage act that highlighted his skills in mimicry and satire. His career came to national prominence on television in the early 1980s, notably in the series "Soap" and "Saturday Night Live."

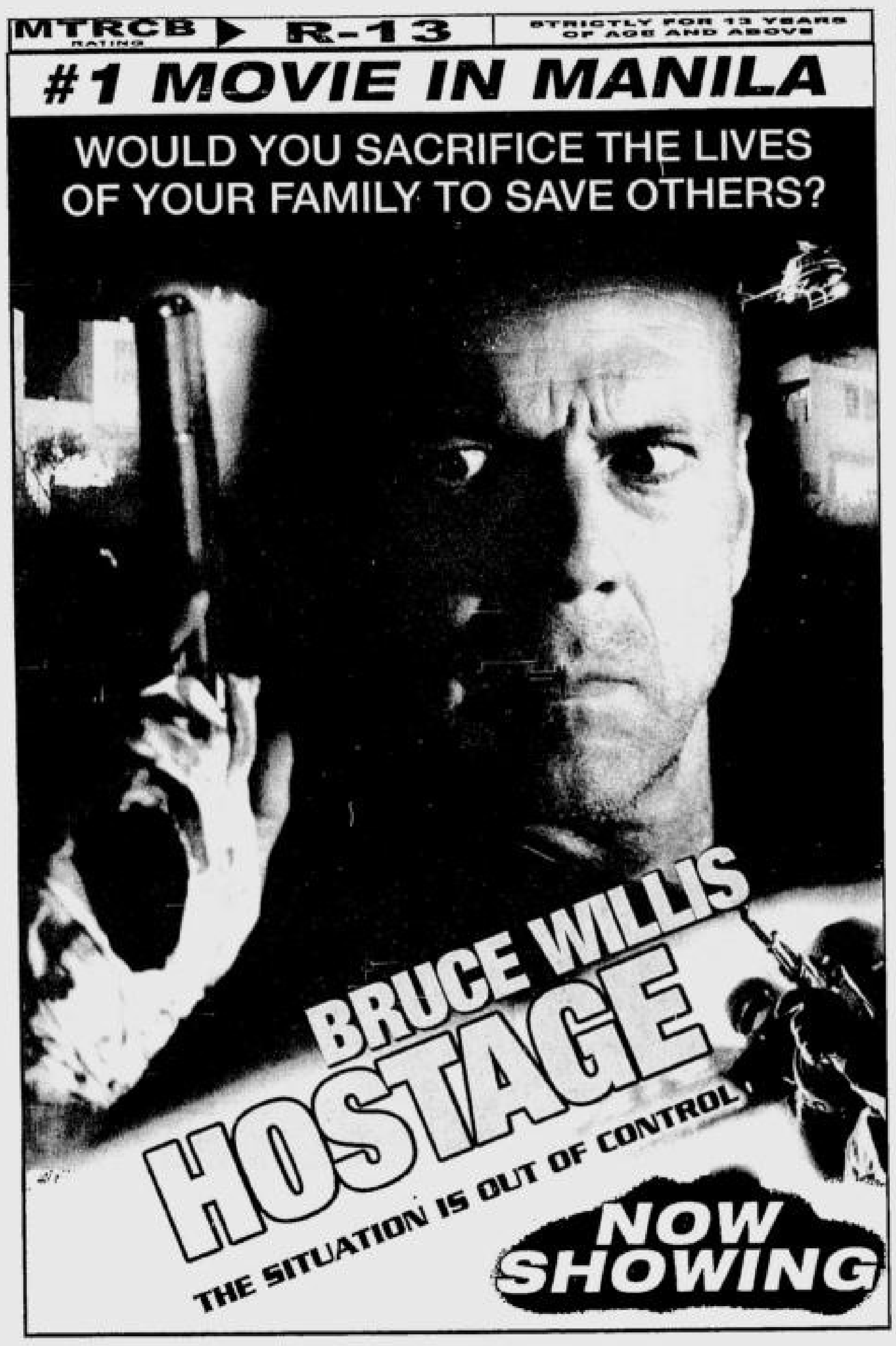
His film career took off with "The Princess Bride." His movies include "Throw Momma from the Train," "When Harry Met Sally," "City Slickers" and "Mr. Saturday Night."

Crystal is admired for the uniquely entertaining way that he has hosted some Oscar Awards ceremonies. A human rights activist, he has also co-hosted many comic relief benefit shows on HBO.

DANNY DeVITO

Despite his being only five feet tall, DeVito packs a powerful comic punch. Predominantly cast as a two-timing creep, lovable or otherwise, he is at his best when venting his spleen on a co-star of comparable clout.

He has been fine sparring partner for **Bette Midler**, and a successful foil to **Arnold Schwarzenegger.** DeVito made his biggest splash early in his career, when **Michael Douglas** cast him in an off-Broadway production of "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest."



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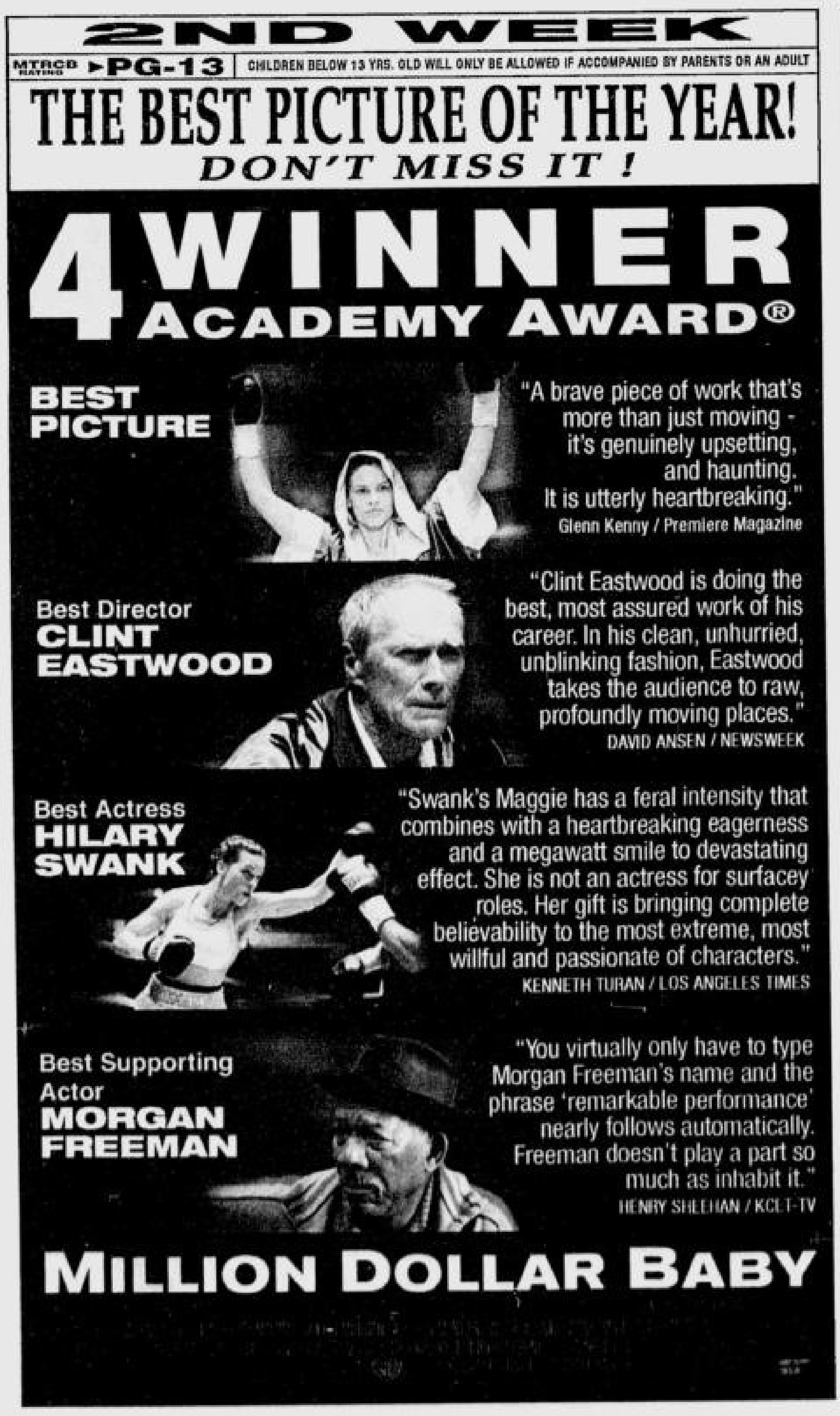

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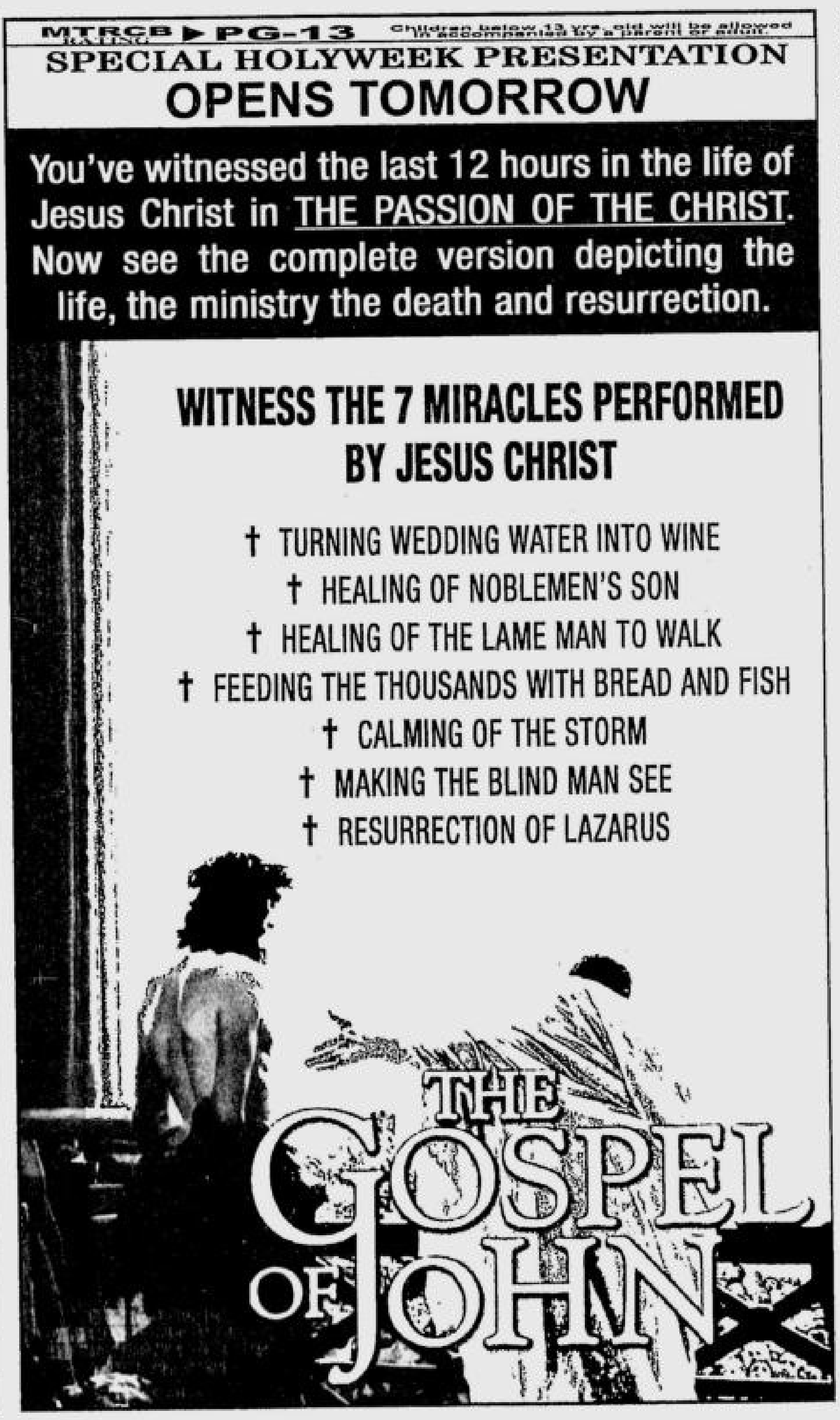

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Boxing as drama

‘Kamao’ is not a typical fight-and-win show, since it also intends to tug at viewers’ heartstrings

By Joyce C. Abaño

VEERING away from the classic reality TV oxymoron of forced natural drama was what the ABS-CBN creative team sought to do when they came up with their new series, “Kamao.”

“Kamao” is a 30-minute reality boxing show shot in Subic, with 11 contenders fighting to win P500,000 and a chance to become the “new boxing superstar.” It is hosted by Robin Padilla, Vina Morales and Manny Pacquiao.

The 45-minute premiere was aired last night.

The series is not the typical fight-and-win contest. It is also intended to tug at the viewers’ heartstrings with the cliché-ish “plot” line: struggling underdog makes his way to the top after taking a few punches.

It is boxing, but not entirely boxing, since the individual stories of the boxers are unraveled dramatically with the collaborators’ expert editing.

Despite it being said that the idea has been taken from NBC’s “The Contender,” Enrico Santos, VP for Entertainment and Creative Synergy and head of the New Genre Unit, said the series was conceptualized early last year.

“We thought of this in February [2004], when nobody had heard of [‘The Contender’]. We’ve been developing reality shows for quite some time already, and last year, we talked of having a new reality show with a purpose. We had many ideas; this one just happened to take form ahead of the others.”

Santos proceeded to stress the difference between the two shows: “Boxing in the United States is just a sport. Here in the Philippines, boxing is life and livelihood for many. Most of our prizefighters feed their families with this. It’s probably true, too, of boxers in the US, but here, we give more heart to it. Therefore, we have more to give to this show than a similar reality show in the States could give.”

Obviously, he was talking of the drama. Santos said the boxers’ sob stories were touching, to say the least. “We cried while editing the footage. Pinoys struggle really hard. Their reaction to either victor or defeat is more intense.”

“Kamao’s” collaborative team couldn’t start taping until November 2004. “We were supposed to start taping in October, but we had to wait for the availability of Robin Padilla, Manny Pacquiao, and Vina Morales. When we got the go-ahead, we started shooting right away,” executive producer Albert Almaden recounted.

Almaden said they had to audition more than 3,000 amateur boxers nationwide for three days before they came down to 11 contenders.

The contestants include: Luisito “Striker” Sangalang from Manila; Regie “Baby Ama” Amarante from Dumaguete; Joel “Joe da King” Garcia from Bacolod; Jaypee “Capila” Ignacio from Northern Samar; Gary “Popoy” Lastrilla from Iloilo; Joel “Joel the Great” Rafols Jr. from Bacolod; Dandy “Singin” Areola from Cagayan; Frankie “Flash” Escaner from Sultan Kudarat; Dennis “Baby Pacquiao” Tugbo from Masbate; Jeanyce “Baga” Baga from Dumaguete, and John Rey “Jonjon” Emilia from Baguio City.

Almaden disclosed that their main criterion for the auditions was basic knowledge of boxing. Dealing with the challenges was second. “To keep it fair, we did not accept professional boxers, although the contestants were required to have prior training,” he said.

The age range is 18 to 25.

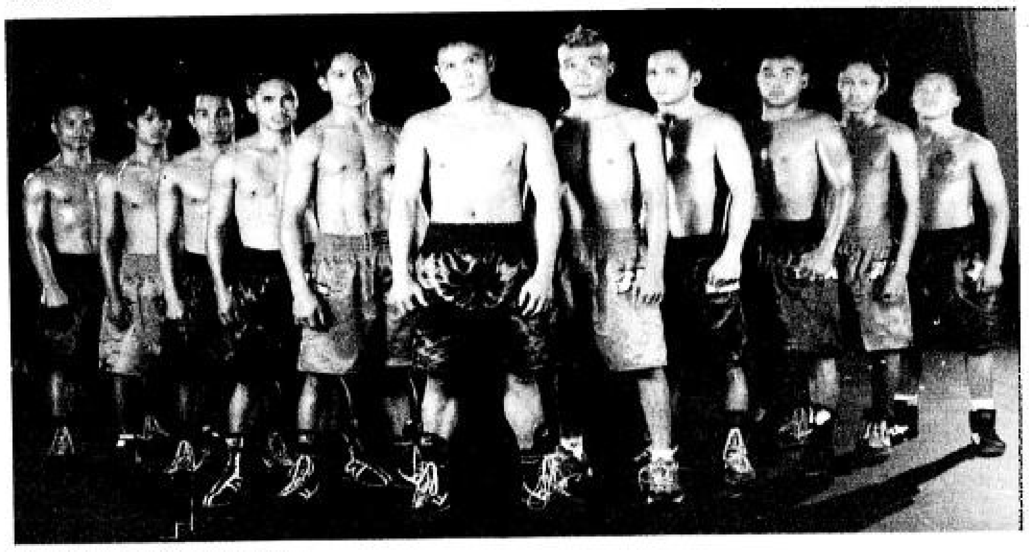
According to Henry Posadas, one of the directors of the series, it wasn’t entirely difficult to shoot the series. “It was, a little bit, physically and logistically . . . but I enjoyed it. Besides, I know boxing,” he said.

To ensure the boxers’ safety, Santos said they got insurance for them. And there was an ambulance and a doctor standing by at all times for the entire month that they were shooting.

Hoping to increase interest in the show after the program’s initial broadcast, the series’ collaborative team vowed to sneak in footages of Pacquiao’s March 19 fight in Las Vegas (March 20 in Manila), and some during his training.

“It will be called ‘Kamao plus Pacquiao reality training,’” Santos disclosed. “I’m sure viewers will like this series. It’s different.”

THE COLLABORATORS. Standing from left: Henry Posadas, director; Enrico Santos, ABS-CBN VP for Creative Entertainment and Synergy; Albert Almaden, executive producer; seated from left, Luisito Sanggalang and Regie Amarante, finalists



THE 11 “Kamao” contenders

Travolta, Thurman chill out again

TAKE FIVE

LOS ANGELES—They went on one of the coolest movie dates ever, at least until she overdosed and he rammed an adrenaline needle into her to jump-start her heart.

Eleven years after “Pulp Fiction,” John Travolta and Uma Thurman are back on the dance floor in “Be Cool,” a follow-up to Travolta’s 1995 crime caper “Get Shorty.”

Travolta returns as super-smooth loan-shark-turned-producer Chili Palmer, this time abandoning the fickle movie industry to try his hand in the music business.

Thurman plays Edie, owner of a small record label where Chili brings his latest discovery, a singer-songwriter with the voice of an angel and the face of a cover-girl pop diva.

The two are model citizens compared to addict and hit man Vincent and coke-head Mia, whom Travolta and Thurman played in Quentin Tarantino’s “Pulp Fiction.”

A more conventional romance develops between Chili and Edie, who do share some time on the dance floor, spinning to the Black Eyed Peas’ cover of a 1960s tune by Brazilian songwriter Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Travolta, 51, and Thurman, 34, sat down with The Associated Press:

What was it about Vincent and Mia that made them work so well together?

TRAVOLTA: Certainly, Quentin’s imagination.

THURMAN: And she is a speed freak and he is a junkie, so there’s no conflict.

TRAVOLTA: Those characters, I say they were hell-bent for death, and these characters are hell-bent for life.

Did the two of you find you had instant chemistry?

THURMAN: I wouldn’t even have thought sitting with John when we met, I was kind of a gnarly little 23-year-old, I wouldn’t have known that we had such screen chemistry.

TRAVOLTA: I don’t think it’s something you can even predict. It’s innate.

Were you able to fall right back into your old chemistry when you started “Be Cool”?

TRAVOLTA: I have to say, I wasn’t aware. I have such innate affinity for Uma. I get happy when I’m around Uma. I can’t wait to talk to her, I can’t wait to catch up. I’m comfortable.

THURMAN: It’s absolutely true. What was really a lovely thing about getting to step into this movie was to start from a place of so much more trust, a sense of the bond and time.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROPEOFSILICON.COM

VINCENT and Mia, now Edie and Chili

Uma, dancing with the guy who did “Saturday Night Fever,” were you intimidated?

THURMAN: Always. When I’m luckiest, I spend the best part of my time being intimidated and inspired. That’s when I’m doing good. It means I’m picking the right partners in life. I never had any advanced level of dance training. I just always fantasized about dancing, though I’m very shy about it. I don’t really like to dance socially, but whenever I get a chance to dance where I feel like it’s my job, the fear goes away.

AP

KC Concepcion

KC due home to do ‘Beauty and the Beast’

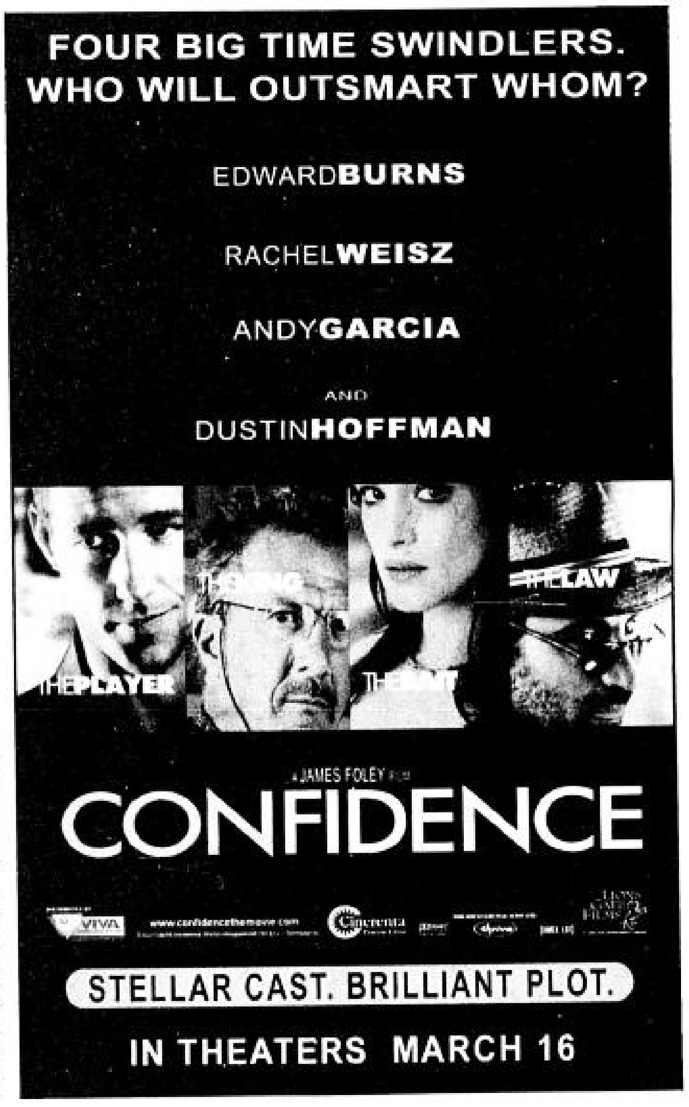
KC Concepcion will return to Manila from Paris, where she studies, to play the title role in the stage production of “Beauty and the Beast,” opening June 16 at Meralco theater in Pasig.

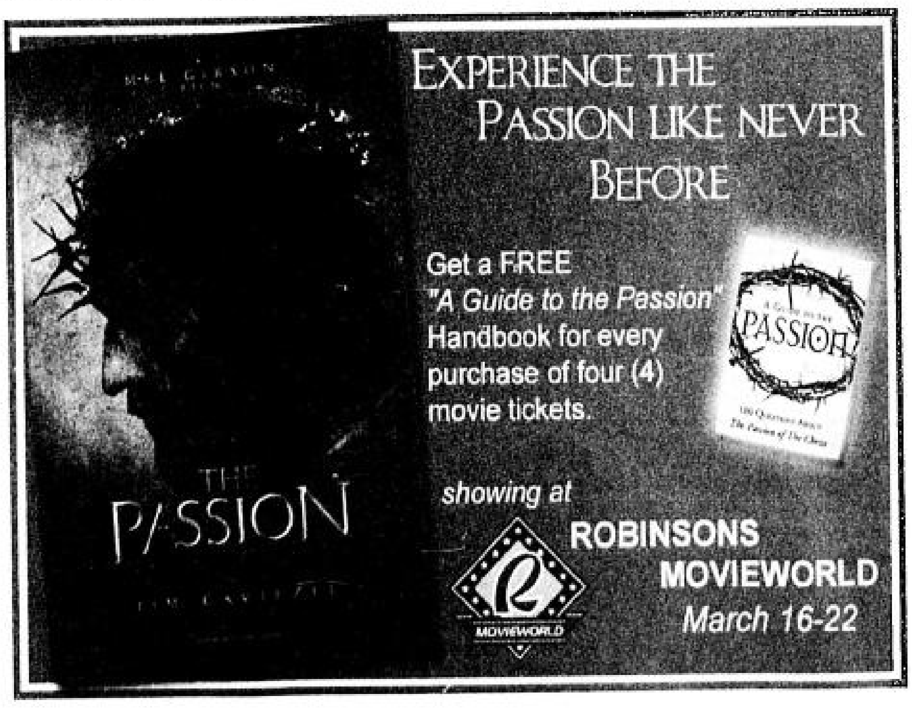
She has been cast as Belle, the intelligent and beautiful village girl who learns to love a prince trapped in the body of a beast. This is her first stage performance since “Little Mermaid” four years ago.

Alternating with KC is Myx VJ Karel Marquez, in her professional stage debut.

“Beauty and the Beast is the sixth longest-running show in the history of Broadway. It was nominated for nine Tony Awards, including Best Musical.

Bobby Garcia directs the Atlantis Productions project. Andy Alviz is choreographer; Mio Infante, costume designer; Jay Aranda, lighting designer; Bobbit Jacinto, sound designer; and Eric Mana, visual illusionist.





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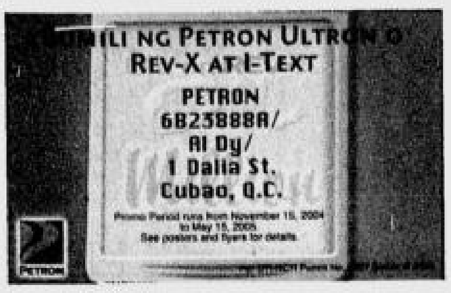
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T-bill rates drop across the board

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY bill rates yesterday dropped across the board in view of the growing optimism on the government's fiscal prospects.

The bellwether 91-day T-bill rate declined by 15.2 basis points to 6.539 percent, from 6.691 percent recorded in the last auction held two weeks ago.

Newly appointed National Treasurer Omar Cruz partly attributed the decline in the rates to the heightened investor interest in Philippine debt paper.

He said the decline in the treasury bill rates would result in the lowering of the cost of government borrowings.

"The outcome (of the auction) was due to the increasing market liquidity, which is boosted by those coming from abroad. It speaks of the positive outlook on the local market," Cruz said in a briefing with reporters after the auction.

In the meantime, the Bureau of Treasury will be selling T-bills and treasury bonds weekly starting next month in a bid to raise P134 billion in the second quarter.

The Treasury is on course to offer a total of P142 billion in the fortnightly auctions of bills and bonds in the first quarter.

The country has been selling T-bills every two weeks since 2002. It adopted the fortnightly offering for T-bonds this year.

The 91-day debt instrument was oversubscribed, with tenders reaching P10.034 billion or double the government's offering of P4.5 billion.

CRUZ

The 182- and the 364-day T-bills fetched rates of 7.59 percent and 8.147 percent, respectively. Both maturities elicited strong market response. Bids for the two government securities stood at P16.33 billion, combined, while the government's combined offerings for the 182- and 364-day debt instruments was only P7.5 billion.

The Treasury auction committee accepted a total of P12 billion worth of bids for all T-bill tenors, raising in full amount the government's borrowing schedule for the week.

"There has already been a flattening of the one-year and six-month yield curve, which is good because it has always been the desire of government to have the yield curve flatter," Cruz said.

T-BILL/ B5

Mining sector sees $555M in new investments

By Ronnel W. Domingo and Christine A. Gaylican

UP TO $555 million in additional mining investments are expected to come in as the local mining industry started promoting 37 new and unexplored mining areas to foreign investors.

Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez, president of the Chamber of Mines in the Philippines, said in an interview that new areas were first promoted during an investment mission last week in Toronto, Canada.

"We have introduced these areas to junior Canadian mining firms," Romualdez said, adding that the exploration of each area would likely cost between $10 million and $15 million.

He said this would constitute the second phase of the local industry's global campaign to step up mining development in the country.

Romualdez said last week's roadshow in Toronto, Canada, had generated strong interest in the 37 areas among Canadian mining firms.

Earlier roadshows, such as that in Beijing and the international conference in Makati, generated investor interest in 23 mining areas that were ready for development.

According to CMP data, $1.3 billion in investments were pledged through different memoranda of understanding with the China Chamber of Commerce on Metals, Minerals and Chemicals as well as the China Ministry of Commerce.

Investors based in different parts of the world have committed a total of about $5 billion after the February forum in Makati.

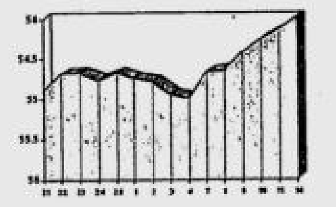
Another roadshow in South

MINING/ B6

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE


FEBRUARY MARCH

P53.97 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 14, 2005

¥104.60 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 14, 2005

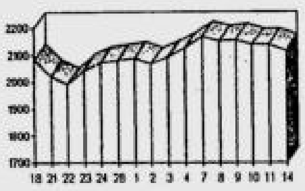
GOLD: $441.10-441.60
per ounce Hong Kong, March 11, 2005

March 14, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.743107676	1.000000	54.1730
Japan	Yen	0.007145	0.009615	0.5209
United Kingdom	Pound	1.430631	1.925200	104.2939
Hongkong	Dollar	0.095279	0.128217	6.9459
Switzerland	Franc	0.6459	0.869187	47.0865
Canada	Dollar	0.616789	0.830013	44.9643
Singapore	Dollar	0.459049	0.617742	33.4649
Australia	Dollar	0.588787	0.792330	42.9229
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.971213	2.652661	143.7026
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198157	0.266660	14.4458
Brunei	Dollar	0.457635	0.615839	33.3618
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00008	0.000107	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019412	0.026123	1.4152
UAE	Dirham	0.202327	0.272272	14.7498
Euro	Euro	1	1.345700	72.9006
Argentina	Peso	0.254489	0.342466	18.5524
Brazil	REAL	0.275429	0.370645	20.0790
Denmark	Kroner	0.134295	0.180721	9.7902
India	Rupee	0.017103	0.023015	1.2468
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.195581	0.263193	14.2580
Mexico	New Peso	0.06724	0.090485	4.9018
New Zealand	Dollar	0.548946	0.738716	40.0185
Norway	Kroner	0.122429	0.164753	8.9252
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012522	0.016851	0.9129
South Africa	Rand	0.128344	0.172712	9.3563
Korea	Won	0.000745	0.001003	0.0543
Sweden	Kroner	0.11025	0.148364	8.0373
Syria	Pound	0.014315	0.019264	1.0436
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024222	0.032595	1.7658
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000346	0.000466	0.0252

STOCK MARKET

Shares end lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARES ended lower Monday, as fund managers liquidated their holdings to raise funds for the initial public offering of holding group SM Investments.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange index closed down 21.78 points, or 1 percent, at 2,115.61, after shedding 0.03 point Friday.

All sectoral indicators finished lower. Decliners led gainers 74 to 24, while 45 stocks were unchanged.

Blue-chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most actively traded stock, down 1 percent at P1,455, in step with the 0.9 percent loss suffered by the company's American depositary receipts in New York Friday.

Globe Telecom fell 2.2 percent to P905.

DA Market Securities president Nestor Aguila said the excitement surrounding SM Investments prodded fund managers to sell some of their holdings to raise funds to participate in the public offer.

The offer, which kicked off last week and ends Thursday, involves the sale of 115 million shares at P250 each. It is the biggest in the market's 70-year history, with estimated gross proceeds of P28.75 billion.

Wall Street's losses Friday, triggered mainly by rising world crude prices, also prodded investors to take profit in select stocks, traders said.

Another factor that weighed on the market was an ongoing standoff Monday at a Manila jail, where a suspected Abu Sayyaf militant in custody managed to grab a guard's rifle and fatally shot at least three prison officials.

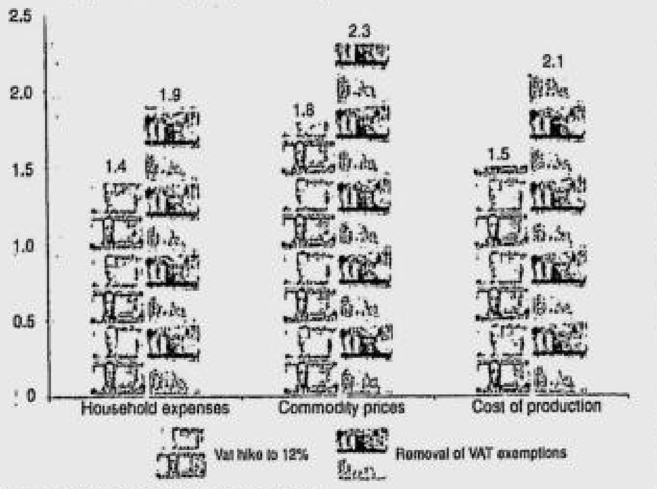
Aguila said if the situation remained unresolved and would escalate, investors might use it as an excuse to continue selling shares in the next session.

Other active stocks included SM Prime, down 1.1 percent at P8.70; Semirara, down 1.1 percent at P45, and Benpres, off 1.5 percent at P1.28. *AP*

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

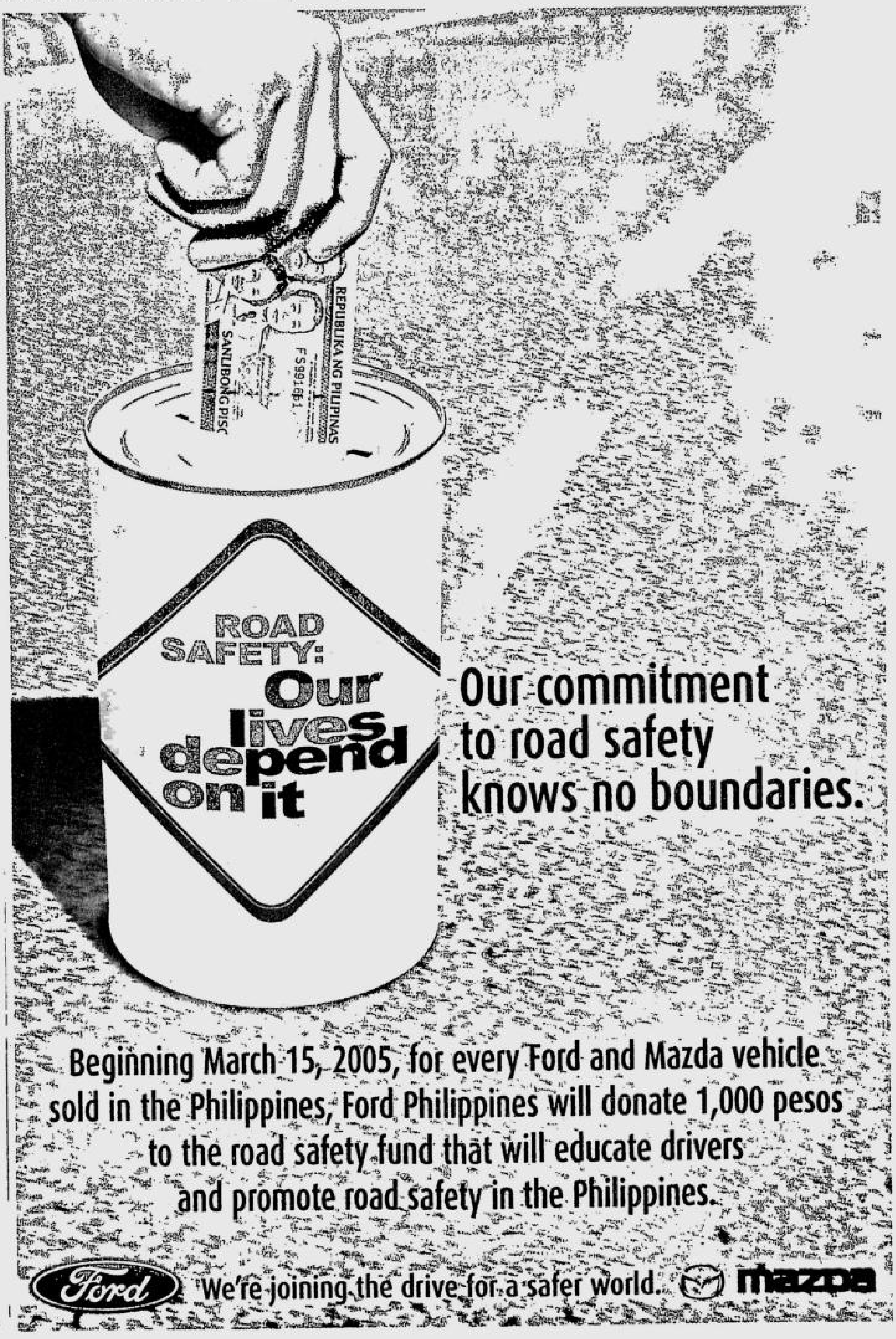
Effects of increasing VAT & removing VAT exemptions (in percent)



Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

INCREASING the value added tax (VAT) to 12 percent will likely jack up household expenditures by 1.4 percent. The hardest hit among the commodities is cement, whose price increased by 2.6 percent. The cost of production of wholesale and retail trade sector is expected to increase by 0.23 percent. The removal of VAT exemptions on petroleum products, independent power producers and professional services will increase household expenses by 1.9 percent. VAT is an indirect tax on goods and services that may be passed on to consumers.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research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Conspiracy teary

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal II

SOMETIME ago under this cute administration of Gloriaetta, the Department of Trade and Industry commissioned a study on a thing like—no kidding—funeral services.

To top it all, the "study" was to be top secret.

Well, maybe this cute administration always considered funeral services as a matter of national security, but we really do not know for sure.

Even then, we (the 80 plus million Filipinos, including the 11 plus million jobless) were already up to here in economic problems.

These included massive graft and corruption. And thanks to the reforms under this cute administration, today we are proud to be the second most corrupt country in Asia.

And will somebody please tell me why we cannot be first for once?

Anyway, down here in our barangay, when you say "commission," you either get paid for something, or you pay for it.

Since DTI was even then already a government outfit whose budget came from our taxes, the department had every right to pay for a study on whatever it pleased. Even funeral services!

* * *

THAT study, it turned out, became the bible of another government outfit, the one called SEC, in its inquisition of companies that sold things like funeral services in advance.

They were the so-called pre-need companies. You know—those selling education and memorial (i.e. funeral) plans.

The SEC subsequently imposed new rules on all pre-need companies, apparently using the DTI-commissioned study.

The new rules forced the pre-need companies to raise billions upon billions of pesos in fresh capital. Or else…

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Today we have this ongoing battle royale, over those rules, between the SEC and the pre-need company called CAP, the 35-year-old, pioneering College Assurance Plan.

Some senators even urged the public to stop paying for the plans that they bought from CAP with hard earned money.

That urging can create for the pre-need company the equivalent of a "run" in a bank, which can very well lead to its collapse.

They forgot to tell us that, if the pre-need CAP collapses following a "run," only its hundreds of thousands of plan holders will suffer. Not the senators, of course!

***

NOBODY knows how much DTI actually spent for the "commissioned" study. What is widely known in the pre-need industry is that DTI hired an outfit called Agile.

That was a group financed by the US-AID, manned by people straight from the United States.

They even held office at government agencies like the Department of Finance and the Bangko Sentral.

By, er, "commissioning" the study, DTI actually showed a lot of interest in a particular industry that was basically unique here in the Philippines.

Nowhere else in the world do people sell funeral services and education plans well in advance of the actual need. Not even in the United States.

How in the world could the Agile people even pretend to be THE authority on this uniquely Filipino business, only DTI could tell at that time.

Yet the top officials of DTI kept things to themselves. They did not even inform the SEC about the "commissioned" study.

Surprise—the SEC was only the agency regulating the pre-need industry. And as far as I can remember, the SEC was under the finance department—not DTI.

* * *

ASIDE from the SEC, also kept in the dark about the "commissioned study," as I said, were the very same companies that it could affect—either good or bad.

One can only wonder where in thin air did Agile get the data when the sole authority on pre-need (the SEC), plus the industry itself, never knew about the study.

And to think, as a policy, this cute administration of Gloriaetta has been talking a lot, both here and abroad, about a "partnership" between the government and business.

Also, it has been paying lip service to this thing called "transparency."

Perhaps, under the DTI definition of "transparency," this cute administration should keep things secret to everybody else.

Thus, the alleged partnership between this cute administration and the pre-need industry resulted in that DTI meddling into SEC affairs, without the industry knowing about it.

Maybe that is just the kind of "partnership" between the government and business that we deserve.

Just imagine what could have happened to the pre-need industry, say, if this cute administration did not have a "partnership" with the business community to start with!

* * *

STILL, the SEC took its task of implementing the new rules, coming directly from the "commissioned" study, with such gusto that the pre-need companies could not even argue with the commission.

So what happened? Well, the SEC rules turned out to be the culmination of…well, wrong figures.

These were based on wrong assumptions, done by people who knew all about life insurance. In effect, the SEC required pre-need firms to put up more capital that they needed.

For instance, in the case of CAP, the famous so-called ARL, or the actuarial reserve liabilities, were off by as much as 50 percent last year.

The SEC required CAP to raise more capital based on the ARL. This, in turn, was 50 percent higher than the actual amount that CAP paid out to plan holders.

It became a case of the "actuarial" (i.e. guesswork) versus the "actual," and the SEC followed the former, based of course on a top-secret study, commissioned by DTI, with a group from a foreign land, which did not have any pre-need business. Wow!

* * *

NOW here is the cherry of an issue, on top of the ice cream of an Agile study, on top of the DTI commissioned halo-halo.

You see, the deceit continued, and it got even uglier. Agile, actually, came up with TWO—not just one—studies.

One of them was finally showed to the pre-need industry, but only after its federation raised hell about the top-secret study that could kill the entire business.

The other version was kept top secret. Agile gave this second version only to DTI and the SEC. For what ungodly reason, only DTI and the SEC can now say.

In fact, the industry only learned about the second still-top-secret version of the study that was commissioned by a government office that had nothing to do with the industry, when media got hold of it.

A news reporter went to the industry, asking for its side on the "study," which of course they never knew existed, much less can comment on.

The "second" study talked about 10 pre-need companies as being—get this—insolvent.

But how in the world did a reporter get hold of a top-secret study that only DTI, the SEC and Agile knew existed?

In other words, such sensitive information, something that could ruin public confidence in one whole industry, contained in a top-secret commissioned study, was purposely leaked to media.

* * *

BUT Agile is gone now, and it left behind a pre-need industry that is already shaken, public confidence in it eroded by a terrific study, using doubtful data and figures.

Sure, Agile gave the industry a copy of one version of its "study" for comment. Agile only forgot to tell the pre-need industry that its comment would be thrown out.

The other "secret" version of the study, the one given to DTI and the SEC, became the basis of the new rules that CAP and the SEC are now fighting over, without much chance of a victory for CAP, of course.

And so you had a top secret study on a business sector, commissioned by a government office that had nothing to do with the sector, done by a US-funded group, which produced two versions, one of which was kept away from the industry. And all of a sudden, new rules came up based on the hush-hush second version. And so what did you have?

In another place and time, people would call it a conspiracy.

* * *

HOW bad is this industry, anyway, that this cute administration of Gloriaetta had to tolerate an apparent conspiracy against it?

Well, the pre-need business only had some P38 billion in trust funds. It only paid P2.5 billion in taxes over five years and it had some P13 billion in existing loans to the government.

And what could the attack on public confidence in it do, anyway?

Well, only six million people—known as beneficiaries—would suffer. And the industry only employed 200,000 people, now left teary eyed by a little conspiracy.

After all, if you could destroy the industry that way, nobody would be accountable. Not those Agile people. They are already back home. Mission accomplished. Damage already inflicted. Wonderful!

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DOE in full blown bid to turn RP into SE Asia's leading producer of wind power

By Abigail L. Ho

IN A BID to turn the country into the leading producer of wind power in Southeast Asia, the Department of Energy last week launched the First Philippine Wind Power Contracting Round, which would give prospective investors a chance to harness the Philippines' wind power potential.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said he was very optimistic that the auction for potential wind sites would draw strong interest from prospective investors, both local and foreign.

But the DOE at present declined to identify which sites would be included in the contracting round.

According to numerous studies in the past, the country has enormous wind power potential—so much so that it has a good chance of becoming the leading wind power producer in Southeast Asia.

Several wind power projects are now underway or are currently in the pipeline for development.

Among these is the 25-megawatt (MW) wind farm of the NorthWind Power Development Corp. in Bangui Bay, Ilocos Norte.

The Filipino-Danish consortium behind the project hopes to complete the wind farm in April.

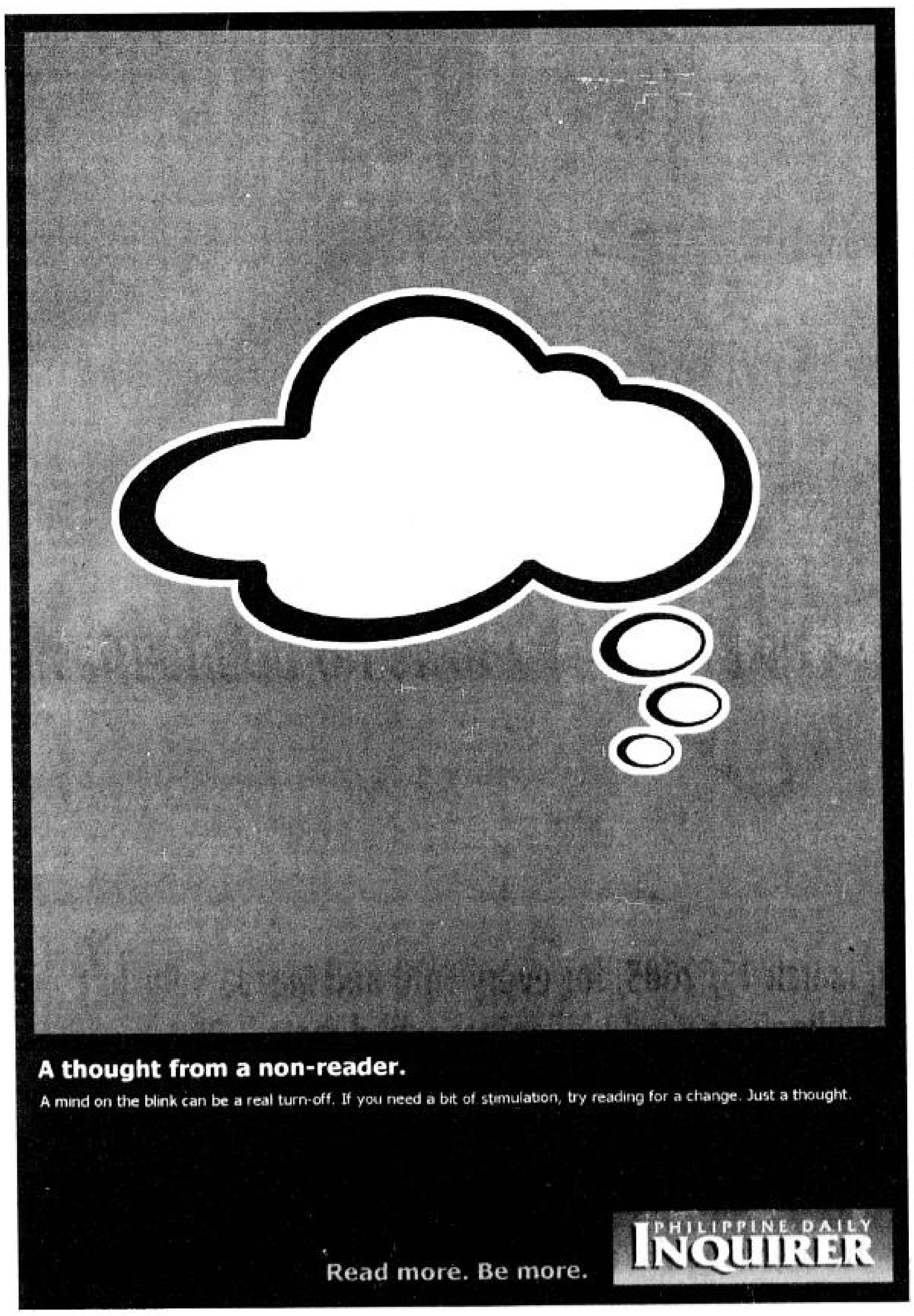
The state-run Philippine National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) is constructing a 40-MW wind power facility also in Ilocos Norte.

Already in commercial operation is a 118-kilowatt (kW) wind hybrid project in Batan Island, Batanes.

Just last December, the DOE awarded five pre-commercial contracts to three firms for the development of wind power potential in various places in the country.

Three of the contracts were given to Philippine Hybrid Energy Systems Inc. for wind power projects in Marinduque, Baleno in Masbate and Tablas in Romblon. These sites had a combined capacity of 30 MW.

Another contract was granted to Trans-Asia Renewable Energy Corp. for the development 30 MW of wind power potential in Sual, Pangasinan. The last contract was awarded to San Carlos Wind Power Corp. for 25 MW of estimated wind power capacity in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.



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TPG plan holders not at risk in legal squabble, says exec

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE CLIENTS of Professional Financial Plans Inc., also known as TPG Corp., need not worry being dragged in the legal scuffle between LBC Development Corp., the major shareholder of the pre-need firm, and ATR Kim Eng Capital Partners, a trust fund manager of TPG Corp.

According to Sato Ridad, TPG president, the legal scuffle is strictly a "shareholder matter" and that TPG's trust fund assets are intact.

"[The dispute] does not in any way affect TPG Corp.'s operations," Ridad said. "TPG Corp.'s Trust Fund is sound and TPG is able to service its planholders."

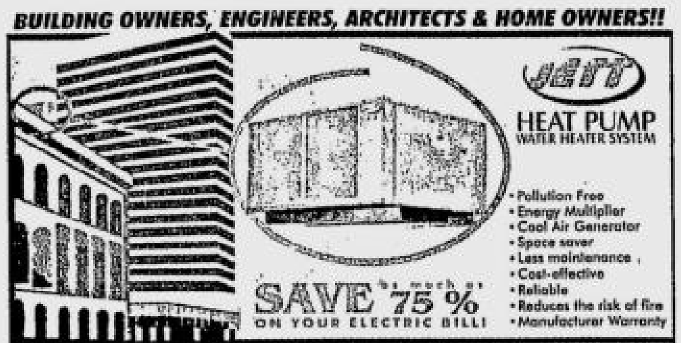
Of TPG's total shares, 86 percent is owned by Professional Mutual Holdings, Inc., a company owned by LBC and Asia Meridian Management Corp. The balance of TPG's 14 percent is held by its chair, Francisco Colayco.

TPG has other trustees besides ATR KE: Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and International Exchange Bank.

To improve the position of its trust fund, TPG is in the process of "liquefying" some of its real-estate assets. The firm is considering either selling some of its assets or entering joint ventures.

To date, the trust fund of TPG Corp. is pegged at P1.6 billion.

Since 2001, ATR KE Capital and the LBC Development Corp. of veteran businessman Carlos Araneta have been locked in a bitter dispute involving property belonging to TPG Corp.



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Toll fees, oil prices weigh on quarry trade

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Pampanga Truckers Association appealed to the Manila North Tollways Corp. to provide a 20-percent discount on fees at the North Luzon Expressway, saying the 500-percent increase in toll rates and oil price hikes were starting to kill the province's quarry industry.

Arnold Liwanag, PTA president, said 40 members of his group, which operates more than 300 trucks, had issued notices for a reduction in the delivery of sand to buyers in Metro Manila since last week.

This came as the cost of hauling sand rose 80 to 90 percent, he said in an interview after Thursday's consultation on a proposal reforming the collection system in the province's quarry industry.

"Some of us are not earning anymore," Liwanag said.

From P87, dump trucks are now charged P439 from this city to the Balintawak, Quezon City exit of the NLEx. The new rates became effective last Feb. 10.

Prices of gasoline have gone up thrice since January. A trip from Porac, Pampanga to Pasig City consumes an average of 90 liters of gasoline, Liwanag said.

Some 3,000 truckloads of sand are hauled from the province daily.

He said there are other costs weighing on the quarry industry.

Haulers pay P300 in sand tax to the provincial capitol, between P50 and P90 in municipal sand tax, and P25-P50 in "pass way" fees to barangays.

Antonio Buyson, a quarry operator, said a single trip nets an income of only P40 after payment of wages of drivers and helpers and the cost of sand, the price of which varies depending on quality.

Liwanag said PTA members have not used the Manila North Road, more known as the MacArthur Highway, because traffic there was heavy and the road conditions were bad. He said PTA members, as frequent road users of the NLEx, should be entitled to at least a 20-percent discount on toll fees.

In the consultation, quarry operator Elvira Sumadchat said Bureau of Internal Revenue collectors have started meeting with her and other traders on the collection of excise tax.

At least 40 percent of the proceeds of the tax would go to the local governments.

Industry leaders said many were still persisting with the trade even with the diminishing income. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

New ₱101-M port seen boosting trade in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—The completion of a new commercial port in Barangay Pantao in Libon, in June, is expected to spur trade in the region with the arrival of more cargo and passengers.

The port was also seen boosting ecotourism in the region, especially in the third district of Albay which covers Libon, Polangui, Oas, Ligao, Guinobatan and Camalig.

Rene Agao, acting manager of the Port Management Office here of the Philippine Ports Authority, projected that once the port is completed by June, initial cargo volume in Pantao would reach 111,057 metric tons (MT), with 64,314 MT inbound and at about 46,743 MT outbound.

In succeeding years, the volume is projected to hit 300,000 MT.

There are currently eight major ports in Bicol—Matnog and Bulan ports in Sorsogon, Jose Panganiban Port in Camarines Norte, San Andres Port in Catandunes, Masbate Port in Masbate, Pasacao Port in Camarines Sur, and the Legazpi City and Tabaco City ports in Albay.

He added that with the completion of Pantao Port, they expect an escalating inter-island and domestic cargo traffic and an increasing average importation record.

"(This) could mean competition since domestic cargo traffic can be diverted from Legazpi and Tabaco ports to Pantao. Or private (foreign) firms could be encouraged to use the new port," Agao said.

Last year, there was a two-percent fall in the volume of international total cargo traffic in Bicol based on metric tonnage, from 3.65 million metric tons to 3.58 MT.

The decline was partly attributed to the series of typhoons that hit the country last year and the lack of export products.

But with the opening of the Pantao Port, Agao said the Bicol region could attract more cargo clients like logistics companies, manufacturing firms producing sea-borne cargoes and agri-business producers.

The P100.8-million port was part of the almost P90-billion budget for major infrastructure development projects in Bicol. *Gil Francis G. Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

GMA to seek lower power rates for Negros Oriental

DUMAGUETE CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has offered to get the Energy Regulatory Commission to lower electricity rates in Negros Oriental.

Arroyo said in an interaction with the media here last week that she would ask the Department of Energy to petition the ERC to lower rates in the province.

She added that local electric cooperatives should support the petition once the DOE files it with the ERC.

The President offered the solution to appease Oriental Negrenses, who have been complaining of high electric rates despite being a source of cheap geothermal energy.

Local residents decry the fact that Dumaguete pays more for electricity than consumers in Bacolod and Cebu, who benefit from the geothermal energy from Palinpinon, Negros Oriental.

The higher rate for Negros Oriental was traced to Napocor's system of charging a uniform rate for all provinces in a grid, with local electric cooperatives adding on a distribution charge depending.

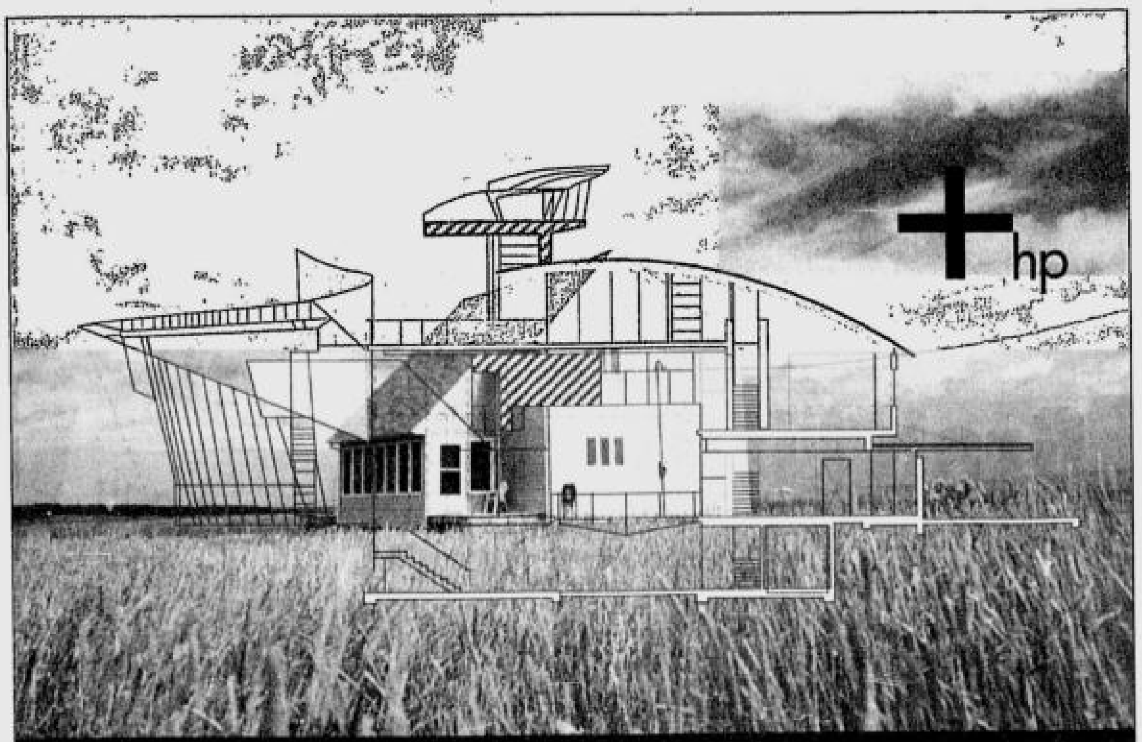
The President said that the Energy Committee could review the "one grid-one rate" policy of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) when it meets in Malacañang.

The review, she said, would look into the ability of the different cooperatives to deliver electricity in the region.

Negros Oriental 2 Electric Cooperative (Noreco 2) institutional services manager Leovigildo Elmaco explained during the recemt forum that Noreco 2 charges more for distribution because it has fewer consumers who share the cost.

Besides, he added, the Noreco 2 provides electricity to far-flung barangays despite the lack of consumers, because of the rural electrification program. *Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

POTABLE water for a remote barangay. These children in Barangay Chua, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat, used to hike for kilometers just to get water for their household use. Now, with the installation of a potable water system, made possible through a grant by the Japanese Embassy, under its Grant assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GAGP), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Alliance for Mindanao Off-grid Renewable Energy (Amore), they just go to any one of the 18 tap stands located across six sitios and they can easily get water. Amore is being implemented in at least 160 remote communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Western and Central Mindanao in partnership with the Dept. of Energy, ARMM and Mirant Philippines.



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Tourism program seen raising $5B in investments

WITH THE right program and closer cooperation between the government and the private sector, the tourism industry will be able to realize its goal of generating $5 billion in tourist receipts and $5 billion tourism-related investments by 2010.

These are the goals of the "Five 5s" tourism program, which was unveiled by Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry vice president for tourism, retailing and franchising Samie Lim at the recent 2nd 'Investourism' Forum at the Mega Trade Conference Center of SM Mega Mall.

The "Five 5s" tourism plan represents the chamber's core commitment to bring in five 5 million foreign tourists, generate $5 billion in tourism receipts, and create five million jobs through $5 billion worth of investments in tourism by the fifth year or by 2010.

Showing encouraging signs of improvement based in international visitor arrivals, which reached 2.32 million in 2004, and the steady increase of tourism related investments, Lim said "the PCCI hopes to raise the level of awareness of the business community on tourism by venturing into tourism-related businesses."

He stressed that "the tourism industry has evidently become a primary engine of development particularly in strengthening the economy, generating foreign exchange and investments, creating employment, and alleviating poverty."

The Second 'Investourism' forum was held in cooperation with the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA) led by its president, Marciano Ragaza.

During the forum, Lim offered the support of the PCCI network—composed of thousands of direct corporate members, 120 affiliate industry associations, and 104 local chambers—in crafting a coordinated national movement to boost the tourism industry.

During the forum, tourism investment experts Asean Tourism Association secretary general Tunku Iskandar, Tourism director for development planning Rolando Cañizal, PTA corporate secretary Guiller Asido, and Philippine Export Zone Authority Deputy Director General Wilhelm Ortaliz gave talks.

More than 250 participants, industry leaders, and government officials attended the event.

Bookstore chain plans to go public

NATIONAL Book Store Inc., the country's largest bookstore chain, is considering going public in view of the warm reception of the market, particularly foreign investments, to the initial public offerings held recently.

"It is something we are seriously thinking about, given the success of SM (Investments) stocks," NBS president Alfredo Ramos told reporters, referring to the IPO of retail tycoon Henry Sy's holding company.

Ramos declined to say how much NBS was planning to offer, or when the IPO would be held.

"It's still too early to say but we are very keen on doing it," he added.

NBS currently own and operate 72 outlets in the country, and seven compact school supply outlets.

In 2002, NBS reported a net profit of P84 million on sales of P3.48 billion. *Christine A. Gaylican*

Forum for entrepreneurs

THE CENTER for Small Entrepreneurs (CSE) will hold its sixth CSE Kapihang EntrePinoy on March 19, 2005, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the College of Saint Benilde Hotel-Angelo King International Center in Malate, Manila.

With the theme "Negosyo Pinoy, Patok: Growing Your Business Enterprise," the 6th CSE Kapihang EntrePinoy focuses on the essentials of sustaining and growing a business enterprise.

The Kapihang EntrePinoy is a regular business forum organized by CSE to gather micro and small Filipino entrepreneurs and impart in them relevant information for their sustainability. It is also a venue for the would-be EntrePinoy to listen to testimonials of now successful Filipino entrepreneurs and learn from them on how to become one.

T-bill rates . . .

From page B1

A flattening of a yield curve means a reduction in the difference between the interest rate of shorter-term security (like 91-day T-bill) and of a longer-term one (like the 182-day). A flatter yield curve is favorable for the government because it means increasing demand for longer-dated securities, therefore giving it more financing flexibility.

Yesterday's auction showed a reduced gap between the yields of the six-month and that of the one-year T-bill to 55.7 basis points. Two weeks ago, the gap was at 94.1 basis points.

"The momentum (of having the rates decline further) is really there," Cruz said, saying the strong performance of the peso had largely to do with the T-bill performance. Last Friday, the peso closed at a new record high of 54.13 to a dollar.

Officials say the positive sentiment on the peso was reflective of the growing confidence in the government's fiscal capabilities, as the Arroyo administration pursues measures, such as higher taxes and anti-tax evasion campaign, to reduce the budget deficit.

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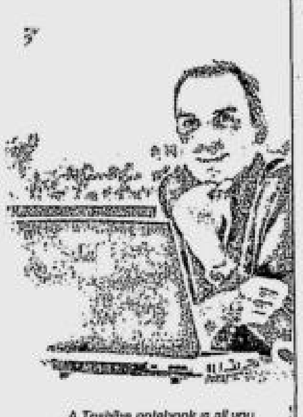

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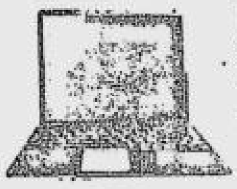

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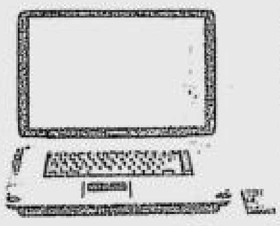

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A wholly weak market

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

LAST Monday, I was on my way to take my weekly donation to the sperm bank when a big guy deliberately bumped into me and stole the object in the top pocket of my shirt. He obviously thought it was a cell phone but I imagined that when he discovered its true nature, he became rather testy. I have never been assaulted before. The nearest I ever got was to eat a salted peanut.

I wanted to report it to the police but it did not qualify as a homicide and they do not have a spermicide department. Clearly, I was in no mood to write an article but I determined to do my duty and looked for another container. All I could find was a 1-liter bottle of Coca-Cola. I tried my best. I used both hands... but I could not open the bottle. So the Fertility Life Bank, which accepts small deposits, has now written me off as a non-performing asset.

I have changed my Internet provider to Vibe, but I refused to rate it because thousands of women would chase me. Imagine me, a human vibe rater.

I saw an advertisement in the Baghdad Morning Post. It said "Wanted Suicide Bombers. Non-contributory retirement scheme. Must have a Sunni disposition." There are so many angry people in Iraq and in Iran. They should merge and call their country Irate.

Filipinos are taking the log ban seriously. At the UP, the math department has banned the use of log tables.

I went to see the movie, The Passion in Latin and Aramaic, two languages I speak fluidly. I decided to translate the Dead Sea scrolls and I found a spelling mistake. It did not say that priests must be celibate; it said that priests must celebrate. So they have been torturing themselves for 1600 years for nothing.

I also went to see Million Dollar Baby. It was very sad and I only went because my wife was the woman who slugged her. It's all about youth in Asia (euthanasia) and the right to die. Two women were in an Australian hospital for the terminally ill. The first woman said to the other, "Are you here to die?" "No," she replied. "Yesterdie." You have to pronounce this with an Australian accent.

Michael Jackson is on trial and the police have a pedofile six inches thick. His lawyer admitted that his client was late. He got a little behind. He told the court that he had a very sheltered upbringing. Up to the age of 15, he was more familiar with Africa than his own body.

My doctor told my wife and me to have sex every night. Now we never see each other.

* * *

Last week, the risk factor exceeded 98 on a scale of 0 to 100, so I advised all subscribers to SELL. Since then, the market has drifted lower in ever-decreasing volume. Last Friday, the net turnover excluding cross sales, was down to P468 million, the kind of volume you expect on Christmas Eve.

At 11 a.m. the ticker stopped moving and the market was officially declared comatose. At its bedside was Manila Water, which had sucked out over $4 billion for the ASWANG dam. Also present was SMIC, and MBT, and SMC administered the last rights. Although diluted by the IPO, Manila Water should open around P7.50.

SMIC was three-quarters sold at P250 a share but most of the interest came from overseas. Local investors don't like heavy-priced shares and most of the funds were already tied up in the preceding IPO. Selling on a P/E ratio of 25 and 2.3 times book value, it looks fully valued and SMPH is much cheaper. Macquarie Asia has said it will support the stock if it opens at a discount. Players are becoming IPO sensitive.

The President is waiting impatiently for Senator Recto to present her with an acceptable VAT package. He is acting like Santa Claus but the bill is likely to contain many subordinate clauses on exemptions. There are five more bills to discuss, but at the rate they are going, this would probably take the rest of the year. The lawmakers are going to recess for three weeks but with their sliced pork, many cannot afford to go abroad.

Foreigners, particularly Americans, are trying desperately to divest themselves of dollars and buy Asian currencies. Vast sums are being poured into Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand, and a little into the Philippines. Money is not just going into our stocks but also in our bonds and currency. That is why the peso has suddenly become so strong. At the conclusion of the G7 meeting, it was officially announced that the dollar had replaced the peso as the worst-performing currency in the galaxy. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have made $1.83 billion by shorting the dollar.

Although the unemployment figures were very good, with 262,000 new jobs created, the dollar is depreciating because of the enormous trade deficit, which widened to $58.3 billion last month. Worse still, the January budget deficit is a huge $104.3 billion. Greenspan will continue increasing interest rates, but it will not solve the problem. He will probably be glad to retire next January as he is probably FED up.

Because of the weak dollar, the Euro is so strong that the economy of the region is being adversely affected. France has double-digit unemployment at a 5-year high, and Germany's unemployed rate of 12.4 percent is at a record high, even higher than the Philippines. The countries are fighting among themselves over exceeding the budget deficit, and growth is minimal. So we are not the only country that has deficit problems.

The German bourse made an unsuccessful attempt to take over the London Stock Exchange, which is by far the biggest in Europe, trading $2.4 trillion a day. By comparison, the other stock exchanges are small. The London Stock Market goes back over 200 years and is the leader in stocks, bonds, insurance and guaranteeing the purity of gold.

It is inconceivable that the British government would even allow a takeover. Can you imagine the Bank of England being run by a bunch of Frankfurters? After defeating Germany twice in two world wars, why should we be taken over by a bunch of Krauts, sour Krauts at that? I am appalled at Tony Blair, a puppet of President Bush, who dragged us into a war that 90 percent of the population did not want. I am proud of being British but happy that I chose to make the Philippines my home 25 years ago. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Court stops SEC from enforcing order on Cemco tender offer

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE COURT of Appeals has stopped the Securities and Exchange Commission from enforcing its Feb. 14 decision ordering Cemco Holdings, a subsidiary of Switzerland's Holcim Ltd., to buy out minority holders in listed firm Union Cement Corp.

In a resolution issued last March 10, the Appelate Court's 10th division said the temporary restraining order would remain in effect within 60 days from Feb. 14.

The SEC and Union Cement minority shareholder National Life Insurance Co., as respondents, were directed by the court to respond to the court order within 10 days from receipt of the resolution.

Cemco, in its petition dated March 8, asked the Court of Appeals to nullify the corporate regulator's order directing Cemco to conduct a tender offer in relation to its purchase of 51 percent of the holding company of publicly listed cement firm UCC.

Cemco argued that the SEC had committed errors of judgement in its findings and grave abuse of discretion.

It asked the court to set aside and reverse the SEC order which applied the rules on mandatory tender offer on the UCC shares.

The SEC order was deemed crucial for the shareholders who owned UCC, now renamed Holcim Philippines Inc.

Cemco claimed it bought into the holding company, not UCC.

SEC Chair Fe Barin said the commission's interpretation of the Securities Regulation Code under Sec. 19 was that the mandatory tender offer should cover both direct and indirect acquisitions.

BARIN

UCC minority shareholder National Life Insurance Company of the Philippines earlier asked Cemco Holdings to buy its shares in the cement firm.

National Life owns about 15.8 million UCC shares, representing roughly 0.25 percent of the company. It earlier asked Cemco Holdings to buy its UCC shares at P6.05 each.

Listed holding firm Bacnotan Consolidated Industries (BCII) and Atlas Cement Corp. sold their combined 51-percent stake in UCHC, a major shareholder of Union Cement, to Cemco Holdings.

Cemco acquired the stake through buying the 21.3-percent stake held by BCII in UCHC and the 29.69 percent interest held by Atlas Cement Corp.

The deal was valued $214 million—representing $89 million for the direct holdings of BCII and $125 million for Atlas' shareholding.

Gov't share in Malampaya revenue to remain intact

THE GOVERNMENT will keep its 60-percent share in the net revenue of the Malampaya oil and natural gas exploration and development project despite the impending sale of portion of PNOC Exploration Corp.'s (PNOC-EC) stake in the project.

PNOC-EC president and chief executive officer Eduardo V. Mañalac said the 60-percent share of the national government in the project's revenue "will remain intact" since what was being privatized was only a portion of PNOC-EC's stake in the 40-percent stake which it was sharing with other service contractors Shell Philippines Exploration BV and Chevron Texaco Malampaya LLC.

Mañalac made the clarification following an earlier announcement by the company, a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co., that it would soon complete its divestment of 49 percent of its 10-percent stake in the Malampaya project.

SPEX and CTMLL each has 45 percent participating interest in the project, the first commercial exploitation of natural gas in the Philippines.

According to Mañalac, the assurance that the government share in the project will remain intact is important "because there are other entities that have very important stakes in the government share."

Among these is the province of Palawan, which has an existing claim on the government's share in the revenues generated by the project. Mañalac said that while the claim was still awaiting a final decision from the court, the national government has already graciously set aside a substantial portion of these revenues for Palawan.

PNOC-EC said it was earmarking portion of the proceeds of the sales proceeds for future exploration and energy development activities.

Mañalac also earlier said the PNOC-EC was partially divesting from the project in compliance with the condition set by the national government when it guaranteed a credit facility from Citibank. The facility was used to buy PNOC-EC's 10-percent participating interest in the 40-percent block.

The LG International-led South Korean consortium of giant energy companies was reportedly keen on acquiring the said PNOC-EC stake.

An LG source said the group believed it had The consortium, with a combined capitalization of close to US$3.2 billion, is composed of LG International, the Korea Gas Corp. (Kogas), Seoul City Gas Corp. and the Daesung Group.

Mining sector sees $555M . . .

From page B1

Africa was launched last month. During the roadshow, government and private mining officials of that country had committed to attend a regional mining conference to be held in Manila in October.

CMP is also set to follow through with its promotion and networking activities in Singapore next week; in Hong Kong late this month; in Australia in May, and in Kuala Lumpur in August.

Also, Romualdez said CMP had entered into cooperation agreements with the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada and the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America to give local small and medium-scale mining operators access to the latest technology and global best practices in exploration and mining development.

He said that with 29 letters of intent and memoranda of understanding, industry officials felt that PDAC's Environmental Excellence in Exploration program would help the CMP in policing its ranks as exploration activities in the country increased in number.

The program, to be course through the Canada International Development Agency, will focus on small and medium operators considering their greater potential in creating jobs.

INTEREST RATES

March 14, 2005-MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 14-Mar-05	MART 1 11-Mar-05
1 Month	6.7154	6.66
3 Months	6.8	6.81
6 Months	7.7857	7.8
1 Year	8.7767	8.795
2 Years	9.5758	9.5975
3 Years	10.3908	10.431
4 Years	10.9033	10.9267
5 Years	11.215	11.2283
7 Years	11.96	11.9883
10 Years	12.3717	12.37
20 Years	12.77	12.7783
25 Years	13.0533	13.275

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 14, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	5,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30	30.5	30	30	931,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	58.5	57.5	57.5	175,000
China Banking Corp.	695	695	695	695	200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	50	50	49.5	49.5	14,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.88	0.88	4,570,000
International Exch. Bank	19.25	19.25	19	19	14,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37.5	38	37	37.5	1,007,400
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	100	100	100	100	2,300
Philippine National Bank	32	32	31.5	31.5	81,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.5	73,300
Security Bank Corp.	31	31	31	31	683,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	33	33	33	33	57,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	250,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	260	260	260	260	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.48	1,178,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1710	1710	1710	1710	20
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	25,600
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.32	1.34	9,420,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	5	5	5	5	20,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	925	925	905	905	25,950
Ipeople Inc.	4.8	5.6	4.8	5.3	1,721,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0625	0.0575	0.0575	46,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0575	0.0575	9,500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	210,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.06	2.06	89,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.5	9,083,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1470	1470	1450	1455	83,300
Ivantage Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	1,010,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.023	68,700,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	20.75	20.75	20.5	20.5	99,500
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	30.5	30	30	940,400
Petron Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.3	4.3	1,551,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.46	292,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	133,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.6	1,314,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.62	240,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.72	760,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.35	4.3	4.35	2,419,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	58,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	5,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	7,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29	29.5	29	29	107,600
RFM Corp.	1.02	1.14	1.02	1.08	5,222,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	180,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56.5	56	56.5	55,100
San Miguel Corp. B	83.5	83.5	82	83	342,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.012	0.01	0.012	396,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	18,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.2	1,028,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.67	460,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	458,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	8,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.049	0.05	13,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.32	2.34	3,897,000
APC Group Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.49	0.49	2,740,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	488,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	120,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	33,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.78	1.74	1.78	90,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	26	26.5	26	26	60,900
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	260,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.28	26,166,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1	1	1	1	20,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	500,000
Calp Group Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	30,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.29	0.29	8,510,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.52	1,440,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.15	2,848,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	9,200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.68	1.7	1,297,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	250,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	57	60.5	57	59.5	1,817,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.12	0.12	17,310,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.9	2.04	1.9	2	2,230,000
Ionics Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	6,000
Ipvg Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.15	4.15	4	4.05	867,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.24	2.12	2.22	604,000
Medco Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.7	1.7	6,736,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	200,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.53	0.56	0.53	0.53	260,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.56	0.56	33,990,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	800,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.41	780,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	410,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	680,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.72	0.79	0.72	0.76	1,150,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.3	52,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	5,360,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.2	2,260,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	2,060,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	62,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.89	0.94	0.87	0.94	510,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.135	0.14	7,890,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.62	1.62	1,814,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.18	1.22	1.16	1.16	1,040,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.62	1.62	10,109,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc	0.39	0.4	0.37	0.37	3,120,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	17	17	17	17	125,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	4,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	5,200
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.3	9.4	9.2	9.3	9,029,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.14	543,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	3,920,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.56	0.56	8,510,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.9	1.9	5,373,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	3,110,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	20,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	750,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.75	334,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	360,000
SM Development Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	131,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.7	11,058,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.02	1.04	1	1	545,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	92,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	25,800,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.1	6.1	6	6	237,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	17,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.39	4,650,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.42	10,410,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	62,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.027	113,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0095	0.0095	0.009	0.009	53,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.18	677,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.42	1,095,000
Semirara Mining Corp	45.5	45.5	44.5	45	1,115,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	3,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	229,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	75,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	5,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3	3.2	2.9	3.1	401,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.225	0.23	0.225	0.225	2,850,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	120,000

DISCLOSURES

METRO Alliance Holdings & Equities Corp. confirmed that the corporation signed a memorandum of understanding with Pan Pacific Capital Advisors Pse. Ltd of Singapore.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc. set 10 percent net profit growth as the initial target for 2005. On reports that the bank is considering selling a new tranche of non-performing assets, the bank clarified that it has not finalized any action in this regard.

* * *

METRO Pacific Corp. reported an unaudited net loss of P244.8 million for 2004, a significant improvement from the P837.9 million loss recorded for 2003.

* * *

THE ANNUAL stockholders' meeting of **Mondragón International Philippines Inc.** is rescheduled from May 14 to Sept. 12, 9 a.m. at Mondragon House Ballroom, Gil Puyat Ave., Makati.

* * *

PHILTRUST Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 26, 4 p.m. at the Philtrust Bank Building, UN Ave., Manila. Only stockholders of record as of March 29 shall be entitled to notice of and vote at the said meeting.

* * *

BENGUET Corp. postponed its annual stockholders meeting from April 27 to June 29, 3 p.m. at the Equitable-PCI Bank Tower 1, Makati Ave cor. HP dela Costa St., Makati. Record date was also fixed at May 5 for stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

Japan Q4 GDP revised to growth, recession over

CHINESE civilians go about their business used to the site of cranes perched atop of rising buildings and the sounds of workers laboring in the new skyscrapers in Beijing, China. Construction projects are transforming Beijing's skylines as the economy booms. AP

TOKYO—Japan's economy grew slightly in the last three months of 2004, revised data showed on Monday, emerging from a shallow recession and confounding projections for a third quarter of shrinkage.

The 0.1-percent rise in gross domestic product (GDP) in real price-adjusted terms was higher than the government's initial estimate of a 0.1 percent contraction and an economists' consensus forecast of a 0.2-percent decline.

It followed 0.3-percent quarter-on-quarter contractions in July-September and April-June, when the economy met a technical definition of recession—two straight quarters of contraction.

Economists said the latest figures confirmed the view that although the world's second-largest economy was stagnant for most of 2004, it was going through an adjustment on its recovery path.

"Although October-December turned out to be a small expansion quarter, and it certainly looks better than the initial estimate that suggested three straight quarters of contraction, the big picture does not change that much," said Osamu Tanaka, economist at Morgan Stanley.

On an annualized basis, gross domestic product rose 0.5 percent against the initial estimate of a fall of 0.5 percent.

A breakdown of the data showed that capital spending rose 0.1 percent, rather than the initially estimated 0.7 percent rise but stronger than economists' median forecast of a 0.5 percent drop.

The biggest positive contribution to the upward revision in GDP was from private-sector inventories.

January's industrial production was revised up to 2.5 percent from an initial reading of 2.1 percent, separate government data showed on Monday, reinforcing views that output may gain in the January-March quarter for the first time in three quarters.

The revised production index using 2000 as the base year was 102.5, the highest since the tech-bubble days of December 2000.

Other data showed corporate bankruptcies in February fell 12.6 percent from a year earlier, down for a 26th straight month.

That marked the second-longest run of decline since World War II, research firm Teikoku Databank said.

Despite a brief rise immediately after the data, the yen declined after failing to rise above its recent one-month peak. *Reuters*

Chinese retail sales going strong

BEIJING—Chinese retail sales in January-February were 13.6 percent higher than a year earlier, slightly less than expected but maintaining a trend of rapid growth in consumer demand seen since early 2004.

The median forecast of a Reuters survey of four economists was a rise of 14.1 percent.

Retail sales have seen annual rises of more than 13 percent every month since April 2004, good news for policy makers trying to boost the role of consumption in an economy that some say relies too much on fickle investment.

The January-February sales figure from the National Bureau of Statistics compared with a rise of 14.5 percent in December from a year earlier and 13.9 percent in November.

"If you look at the trend, consumption has been improving, and I figure that probably will continue in the coming year," said Yiping Huang, an economist with Citigroup in Hong Kong.

"We just need to be aware of downside risk, but overall we're still optimistic about consumption going forward, especially as the job market conditions improve and the economy stays strong."

The combined January-February figure flattens out distortions caused by the week-long Lunar New Year holiday, which fell in February this year but came in January in 2004.

The Commerce Ministry said in February that retail sales were expected to be about 10 percent higher this year than in 2004, when they grew by 13.3 percent.

Adjusted for inflation, retail sales rose 10.2 percent last year as the government tried to bolster consumption to help counter a slowdown in investment and keep the world's seventh-largest economy in balance.

"The government is stepping up its efforts to boost consumption, including cutting taxes and boosting subsidies for farmers while improving social security for the urban poor," said Zhu Jianfang, an economist at China Securities in Beijing.

"Rising consumption will provide a cushion for the economy as investment growth slows, but changes in consumption tend to be less volatile than investment growth."

China is to report a combined January-February figure for fixed-asset investment this week.

Beijing has taken a series of measures to tighten credit since mid-2003, targeting a handful of industries including property, steel and cement as the government seeks to make growth more sustainable.

Retail sales accounted for 39.5 percent of gross domestic product last year, 0.4 percentage point more than in 2003, indicating consumption played a bigger role in driving economic growth, the commerce ministry said. *Reuters*

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

We are pleased to offer the **6th Production Management Development Program (PMDP)** run starting April 16 – July 23, 2005 every Saturday at UP-Technology Management Center, Diliman Campus but first, let's hear from one of our graduates..."

"Dear PROMAP. Thank you very much. I'm now here in Thailand for the transition. I would say that part of this milestone in my career is the learning's I got from the PMDP. Hope the PROMAP will continue its noble objective of developing career of our professionals in the manufacturing field and eventually help out our industry. Again thanks and warm regards! - Joey Abarrientos, Plant Manager, Kraft Foods (Thailand) Ltd., Powdered Beverage Plant, Graduate, 1st PMDP".

For this run, we have embedded within the core topics, new tools such as Theory of Constraints, Six Sigma, Self directed teams, etc. Come and register this early and enhance your production / operations management skill!

PMDP Core Topics:

- Supply Chain Management
- Production Planning
- Inventory Management & Control
  Industry Speaker: Mr. Jovy Joder, Managing Consultant, ESI Systems Solutions
- Human Resource Management
  Industry Speaker: Mr. Victoriano Seguora, HRD Manager, Interphil Laboratories, Inc.
- Quality Management
  Industry Speaker: Mr. Emilio Valudes, General Manager, LEAN Processes, Inc.
- Lean Operations
  Industry Speaker: Mr. Ramon Salazar, Factory Manager, Intel Technology Philippines
- Project Management
- The Balance Scorecard (Key Performance Indicator)
  Industry Speaker: Mrs. Wilma Bocaya, Production Manager, Jollibee Foods Corp.
- Financial Management
  Industry Speaker: Mr. Elmer Gascon, Finance Manager, Johnson & Johnson
- Issues in P/OM (Panel Discussion)
  Panelist: Mr. Antonio Jopson, General Manager – Testech Inc.
  Mr. Luigardo Mendoza, President – RCM Mfg. Inc.
  Mr. Napoleon Dagdagan, VP-Manufacturing – RFM Corporation
  Mr. Norman Camungol, Sales & Technical Services Manager – ASRI
  Mr. Isauro San Pedro, Corp. Opns. Director – B-Mrk Enterprises
  Mr. Michael Castro, Vice President – Powerplus Phils., Corp.
- Plant Visit

* Industry Speakers are subject to change depending on their availability

Hurry! Register now few slots remaining.

REGISTRATION FEES

	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS:
Full Program	*26,000.00*	*35,000.00*
Per Module	*3,500.00*	*5,000.00*

For inquiries, please call the PROMAP secretariat at 533-57-20 or 535-78-10 & look for Benidict or e-mail us at secretariat@promap77.org & visit our website promap77.org

Asian tech stocks drop

SINGAPORE—Asian technology stocks fell on Monday in a reprise of Friday's decline in US peers, while revised data showed Japan's economy had pulled out of a mild recession last year but remained anaemic.

European stocks were expected to open lower after US data raised concerns for interest-rate sensitive stocks. German flag-carrier Lufthansa was in focus after it said it wanted to buy Swiss International Air Lines.

Oil prices and gold edged off of 2005 highs hit last week.

The uninspiring Japanese economic report failed to spark a rise in the yen, leaving the dollar to drift a few ticks higher, and Japanese stocks sagged while government bond prices fell.

Japan's Nikkei stock index closed down 0.62 percent at 11,850.25, with Tokyo Electron Ltd.'s nearly 3 percent drop leading the tech sector's decline.

MSCI's index of non-Japan shares edged 0.1 percent lower, led by a 1.51 percent fall in its technology component.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's benchmark stock index touched an all-time high after US tobacco giant Philip Morris said it was bidding for one of Indonesia's top cigarette makers.

The dollar was expected to remain under pressure ahead of US current account data on Tuesday.

On Friday, the United States reported that consumer demand for imports widened its trade deficit to the second biggest on record in January, feeding fears of faster interest-rate hikes ahead.

Japanese bond prices fell after the revised gross domestic product data showed Japan's economy grew a better-than-expected 0.1 percent in the three months to December from the preceding quarter.

US light crude fell 7 cents in Asian trade to $54.36 a barrel by 0630 GMT after having made a run at the record of $55.67 last week.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) meets on Wednesday. The United Arab Emirates and Kuwait suggested the cartel might agree to keep pumping above output quotas to cool prices. Iran later said Opec might leave quotas unchanged.

In Asian share markets, Hong Kong's benchmark index edged up 0.17 percent, while Taiwan's index fell 0.79 percent and Singapore's slipped 0.6 percent.

Australia's index rose 0.71 percent on a rebound in mining and oil stocks.

South Korea's benchmark KOSPI stock index fell 0.3 percent as the won again briefly punched through the 1,000-won mark against the dollar after successive days of intervention, hurting exporters.

In Indonesia, Philip Morris International Inc., the tobacco arm of the Altria Group and maker of Marlboro cigarettes, said it was bidding $5 billion to buy Indonesia's number three tobacco firm, PT Hanjaya Mandala Sampoerna Tbk, to expand in the fifth-largest cigarette market. *Reuters*

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Stay Competitive. Bridge Your Performance GAPS!

**March 31-April 01, 2005
Mandarin Oriental
Hotel, Makati City**

Fee per participant:
Php 15,000.00
[illegible]

Contact: Ms. [illegible]
Mercer Human Resource Consulting
10th Floor Citibank Center
Paseo de Roxas, Makati City
Philippines 1200
Phone (632) 810-0704/05
Fax (632) 810-2242

S.C.O.R.E. it! Bridging Performance Gaps

Course Overview:

When employees do not perform well, there are usually a number of reasons. The S.C.O.R.E. model provides easy to follow yet effective steps in addressing performance problems. The S.C.O.R.E. model offers tools that can be independently used to address performance problem at any level.

You will learn to:

- identify performance gaps
- pin down root causes
- select the right intervention
- design implementation matrix
- evaluate and measure outcomes

Who Should Attend?

- Team Leaders
- Supervisors
- Line Managers
- anyone responsible in setting and achieving targets

Expected Output:
You will design your own continuing improvement matrix using the S.C.O.R.E. model

UPCOMING SEMINARS:

- Sales Effectiveness – April 13
- Sales Incentive Design – April 20-21
- Training Dept. to Strategic Partners – April 27-29

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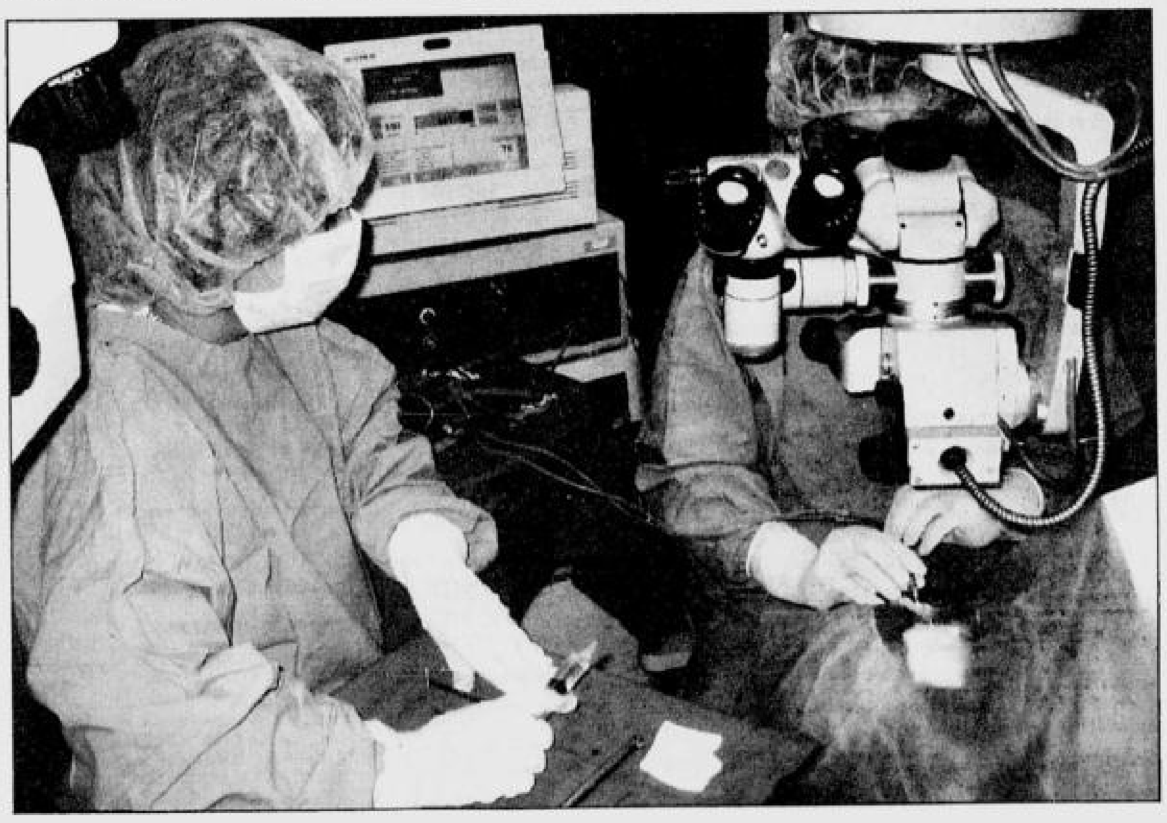

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EXTRA-JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT AMONG HEIRS OF FERNANDO BOCALAN HAS BEEN MADE BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ELENITA APOSTA; DOC #63; PAGE 13; BOOK #1; 2004 (PDI MAR. 8, 15, 22, 2205)

AUCTION SALE

MEYCAUAYAN-FILIPINAS Pawnshop, Alaw Complex, Calvario, Meyc. Bulacan. All unredeemed pledges of SEPTEMBER 2004 will be auctioned on MARCH 21, 8:30 am. - Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer.
(PDI - MARCH 15, 2005)

MUNOZ-FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP,Roosevelt Ave., Katipunan, Diliman, Quezon City. All unredeemed pledges of OCT. 2004 will be auctioned on MARCH 21, 2:00 PM. - Lanuza & Sons - Auctioneer.
(PDI - MARCH 15, 2005)

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PSALM
POWER SECTOR
ASSETS & LIABILITIES
MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee ("*Committee*") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

Bataan Thermal Plant Equipment, Components, Auxiliaries and Accessories located at Limay, Bataan

(the "*Asset*"). The Asset is being sold on an "*as is where is*" basis.

Interested parties are required to submit a Letter of Interest ("*LOI*") to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on March 28, 2005 (the "*LOI Submission Deadline*"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred U.S. Dollars (U.S. $ 500.00) (the "*Participation Fee*"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. Only interested parties that submit the Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking and Participation Fee to PSALM on or before 5:00 p.m. on March 29, 2005, shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from March 15, 2005 until March 29, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. (the "*Deadline*") at the PSALM Office. Only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	March 22 to April 22, 2005
Pre-bid Conference	March 31, 2005
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM	April 28, 2005

A single stage two-envelope bidding system has been adopted. Other details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package. References to dates and times in this notice shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its total bid price in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, confirmed by a local bank and acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 893-8202, fax number (632) 840-5341 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify any party for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **Vincent S. Perez Jr.**
Chairman
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—March 15, 16 & 17, 2005)

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BID AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) invites A & E Consultants to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Architectural and Engineering Design Consultancy Services for the BSP Branch Buildings in Legazpi and Naga.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is P9.12M.

The scope of work includes among others the preparation of plans, specifications and detailed estimates to include architectural, electrical, mechanical, structural, electronics and communication, plumbing/sanitary and landscaping works as specified in the Terms of Reference.

The Minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:

1.0 The firm must have been in operation for the last fifteen (15) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation).

2.0 The first must have rendered within the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) A & E design consultancy services, at least three (3) completed new construction projects of similar nature like office buildings, banks, exchanges and financial institutions of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP projects and must be able to submit a certification of satisfactory performance for at least two (2) of the required three (3) projects.

3.0 The principal or Managing Officer must be a Registered Architect with at least twenty (20) years experience in architectural design and coordinating team efforts in A & E design.

4.0 The key personnel should be Registered Architect/s and Engineer/s with at least fifteen (15) years design experience.

5.0 The firm (partnership/corporation/joint venture) must be at least 60% owned by a Filipino citizen.

6.0 In case of a joint venture, a valid joint agreement. The joint venture must have rendered A & E design consultancy services for at least two (2) completed projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.

The quality-cost based evaluation procedure stipulated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 9184 shall be adopted for this consultancy service requirement.

Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretarial on 08 to 15 March 2005 for a non-refundable fee of P200.00, Room 204, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Streets, Manila and must be submitted duly accomplished to the same office not later than 4:30 p.m. on 21 March 2005.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive defect or any formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any consultant/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obliged to compensate/indemnify the consultant for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **MELPIN A. GONZAGA**
Vice-Chairman

(PDI–March 8 & 15, 2005)

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MA. CORAZON E. MARTINEZ

Peacefully joined the Lord
on March 12, 2005
at the age of 75.

Her bereaved husband **Georgie**; only daughter **Claire**; & grandson **AJ** and other loved ones request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will take place at La Funeraria Paz on Wednesday, March 16, 2005 after the 7:00 a.m. Mass.

"... absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
Matthew 10:39

DR. AGRIPINO REBONG OCA

of Victoria, Laguna, San Rafael Village, Navotas & BF Resort Village, Las Piñas City

Husband of the late Dra. Letty Matias Oca

Peacefully joined our Lord
on March 11, 2005 at the age of 86.

His bereaved children **Dennis, (Arturo) Cecil & Ditas, Marison,** and **Gwen & Janak,** brother-in-law **Paking,** grandchildren **(JC) John Cyril, Art, Pratima, Arjun** and **Sabrina,** nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Ipil Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 17, 2005 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass.

The family of the late

AIDA CLEMENTE TEOTICO

Wishes to inform relatives and friends that her body lies in state at **Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish, West Triangle Homes, Quezon City.**

Her bereaved children **Bino, Ana, Eric** and **Chiqui** request the pious readers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Cremation will be on March 16, 2005, 8:00 P.M. at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, after the 5:30 PM Mass at Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved in whom I delight."
Matthew 12:18

In Memory of our Beloved

Maria Gutierrez Aguila

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 12, 2005
at the age of 85.

Her loving husband, **LAURO;**
Children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren,
ROLAND (†) **& Mila, Pinky & Randy** and **Renzo** and **Tanya**
FLORANTE, Andy & Stella and **Santi,**
Jun & Lorraine and **Annika & Maria,**
FERDINAND & Fem, Francis, Fernand, Francesca & Fedine
JOSEPHINE & Federico Borromeo, Pia & James and **Aaron,**
Federico & Arizza and **Giancarlo & Fionna**
and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Santuario de San Antonio Chapel, Forbes Park, Makati. There will be a nightly mass at 7:00 P.M. Funeral Service will be on Wednesday, March 16, 2005 at 9:00 A.M.

Cremation will follow at Loyola Memorial Chapels. Interment will be at Christ the King Sepulcher at 4:00 P.M.

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City • Tel. No. (062) 992-7763

SF-GOOD-05

Sol. No. CL-05-03-0100

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The *City Government of Zamboanga*, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Contract	Location/Office	Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration	Delivery Period
1. Electrical Supplies (Streetlight)	GSO - Stocks	Lu 250, 250 Watts HPS Lamp, Luminaire, etc.	1,646,250.00		20 w.d.
2. Brand-new Motor Vehicles	S.P.	4x4 Double Cab Pick-up	2,436,000.00		20 w.d.
3. Drugs and Medicines Supplies	GSO - Stocks	Ambroxol, Amoxicillin, etc.	3,787,237.00		15 w.d.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Name of Contract	Location/Office	Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration	Delivery Period
4. Security Services	GSO	Security Guards	6,142,500.00		April 1 to Dec 31,2005

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 8, 2005
2. Pre-bid Conference will be conducted at City Budget Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City	March 10, 2005; 10:00 AM
3. Opening of Bids	March 22, 2005
4. Bid Evaluation	March 22, 2005
5. Post qualification	March 23, 2005
6. Notice of Award	March 30, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P700 (Item No. 1), P900 (Item No. 2), P1,200 (Item No. 3) and P1,700 (Item No. 4) to the City Treasurer.

The City Government of Zamboanga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) VIRGINIA SAN AGUSTIN GARA
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 7 & 15, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education (DepEd)
SECONDARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SEDIP)
National Project Management Office (NPMO)
5th Floor, Bonifacio Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City

INVITATION TO BID

The Republic of the Philippine through the Department of Education is a recipient of an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the amount of JPY 7,210 million to finance the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of the loan will be utilized for eligible expenditures for the new construction of the following projects.

Project Description	School	Location
1. Single storey, 3-classroom building 2. Single storey, 2-classroom building	Biliran National Agricultural High School	Biliran, Biliran
3. Single storey, home economics building	Bool National High School	Bool East, Culaba, Biliran

JBIC requires that bidders and contractors as well as the DepEd, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA loans, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of the such contract. In pursuance of this, JBIC: (i) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question and (ii) will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA loans if it, at any time, determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for or in executing another contract financed by JBIC ODA loans or other Japanese ODA.

Bidding is open to all Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) registered contractors or joint venture contractors with valid license, general building in category and eligible to enter into a contract based on award. Schedules of issuance of bidding documents, pre-bidding conference and opening of bids are as follows:

Municipality		Issuance of Bidding Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Opening of Bids
Biliran	Date	March 16-29, 2005	April 1, 2005	April 13, 2005
	Place	ME's Office, Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall
	Time		10:00 AM	10:00 AM
Culaba	Date	March 16-29, 2005	April 6, 2005	April 18, 2005
	Place	ME's Office, Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall
	Time		10:00 AM	10:00 AM
Contact Person: Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee or Municipal Engineer				

The complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the Office of the Municipal Engineer and payment of non-refundable amount of P2,000.00 to the Cashier's Office. They may visit also the DepEd website at http://www.deped.gov.ph or the Procurement Service at http://www.procurementservice.org.

Submission of bids together with all the documents required in the bid documents must be delivered to the aforesaid venue and dates. All bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of all the bidders or their legally authorized representatives.

(Sgd.) JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ
Undersecretary for Administration and Finance

(PDI – March 15 & 22, 2005)

CHOOSE HEALTH AND JOY CORPORATION
Importer of Ayurvedic Herbal Food Supplements
in need of
Distributors and Sales Agents
(Product Training Provided)
For more details, call tels 7243500 & 7217849

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The services of **ANTONETTE D. CINCO**, whose picture appears above and with address at Brgy. 84, Manlurip San Jose, Tacloban City have been terminated by the Roa Family for cause effective last March 07, 2005.

Any transaction with Ms Cinco shall no longer be honored.

(PDI - March 15, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District II - B
MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

March 11, 2005

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to 2610 of the TCCP, as amended, in relation to CMO 5-2003 dated March 17, 2003, and CMO 18-2003 dated 25 July 2003, there will be a Public Auction Sale through SEALED BIDDING, to be conducted by this Port on **March 18, 2005** at 2:30 P.M. to be held at the 2nd Floor, MICP Building, North Harbor, Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, Manila, the herein described articles in lot. Said article shall be available for viewing on **March 17, 2005.** In the event of a failed bidding, the second auction shall be conducted on the first business day following the first bidding.

Lot No. 085-04 WELCOME INT'L TRDING S.I. No 04-012 5th Advertisement 'As Is Where Is' 'Proceeds held in trust.'	884 bags. 25 kgs./bag Monosodium Glutamate (Vetsin) Marks Royal Dragon & Daichi Moto Note: 13 bags (B.O.)
Floor Price: Php610,084.47	Location: ICTSI CY TGHU-2137004

Basic Guidelines:
1. File the duly accomplished Registration Form (name, address, TIN and other relevant circumstances to be indicated).
2. Php2,000.00 Registration Fee (Non-Refundable).
3. PhP20,000.00 Cash Bond (Refundable).
4. Submission to the ACDD Proof of Qualification involving regulated commodities, such as Rice (NFA License).
5. The highest bidder shall be required to pay 50% of the bid price either in cash and/or Manager's Check immediately and the balance of 50% shall be paid within the next business day.
6. After the second failed bidding, a particular lot may be offered to all qualified bidders for negotiated sale, subject to compliance of the requirements under Section IV-J of CMO 5-2003.
7. Payment by Cashier's/Manager's Checks to the BOC/MICP shall bear the following:
   a. Pay to the order of Land Bank of the Philippines - BOC MICP E.O.
   b. For credit of the Bureau of Customs.
   c. For the account of:

____
Bidder

For further details, please contact Mr. Isidro A. Pre, Chief, Auction & Cargo Disposal Division, MICP, Tel. No. 247-09-77.

(Sgd.) Atty. FELIPE A. BARTOLOME, CESO V
District Collector of Customs

(PDI – March 15, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be informed that MARCH 18, 2005 is the last day of registration for the August 8, 2005 ARMM elections.

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti TRADE & INDUSTRY

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of **DO1 GMA INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION** with office address at **Molave Industrial Compound, Paliparan Road, Paliparan, Dasmariñas, Cavite** for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, for **New Export Producer of Garments** at a capacity of **1,512,000 pieces per year** with project site at same office address stated above has been officially accepted on **March 11, 2005** and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 11th day of March 2005.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Officer-in-Charge

(PDI–March 15, 2005)

JOB Market
VISIT US AT:
www.jobmarketonline.com

BUSINESS

Limit VAT hike to 3 years, experts urge

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE IMPLEMENTATION of the proposed increase in the value-added tax (VAT) to 12 percent must be limited to at least three years as other measures, such as the removal of certain tax exemptions, may be enough to generate the needed revenue for the cash-strapped government, according to University of Asia & Pacific economists.

In a paper entitled "VAT ... With Conditions," UA&P economists Victor Abola and Leandro Tan said the removal of certain exemptions and the specific VAT system reform would be enough to generate some P55 billion. They said this would just be about the same as raising the VAT rate to 12 percent from the current 10 percent.

"Theoretically, the rate increase will not be necessary if the alternative measures are legislated," the paper said.

But in view of uncertainties in the accuracy of the estimates, the paper said it would be best to legislate a "conditional" 2-percentage VAT hike—and limit the implementation to three years—"in order not to delay the reduction of the budget deficit, which will lower interest costs and free more funds for infrastructure and basic provision spending."

The economists said that no more than 80 percent of the additional tax collected must be used to reduce the budget deficit.

"The specific proposal is that [the period of implementation] will last no more than three years, or when total VAT collections, as a percentage of the GDP [gross domestic product], reach 4.2 percent, or roughly 1 percentage over the present VAT tax effort, whichever comes first," according to the paper.

"If the VAT system reform measures work well, then it is possible that the 2 percentage rate increase can be removed after a year," the paper added.

A time-bound increase in the VAT, the economists said, would be possible as long as the exemptions proposed by the Department of Finance are removed and the VAT system reform measures are put in place.

The paper went on to cite simple VAT system reforms, requiring legislation, that could enhance revenue performance of the present system.

"There are good reasons why the administration prefers this tax [VAT] for revenue generation," the paper said. "Increased collections start the month after effectivity of the tax law, since VAT is paid monthly."

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AiA Trucks & Equipment

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MARCH 17, 18, 19 & 20, 2005
(Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday)
Sale Starts at 8:00 A.M.

Inspection Dates: March 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16
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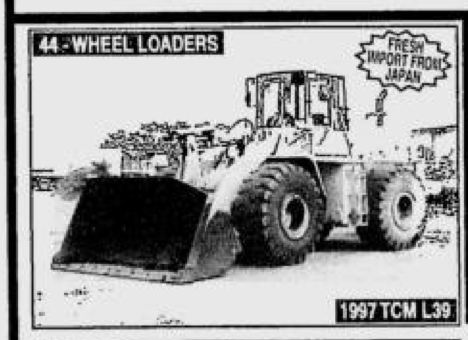
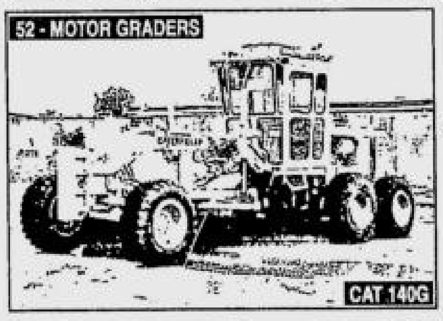
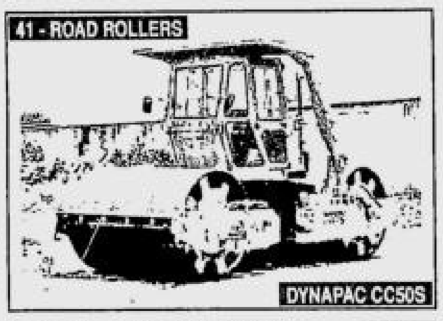




41 - WING VANS
HINO FR WING VAN (Late Model)

44 - CARGO TRUCKS
ISUZU CVR CARGO TRUCK



15 - TANKER TRUCKS
FUSO 8W TANKER - 12KL

50 - SELF-LOADERS
ISUZU FWD SELF-LOADER W/ BOOM

59 - AGRICULTURAL TRACTORS
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GMA 7 stockholder open to selling stake

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE FAMILY of Menardo Jimenez Sr., who owns 35 percent of GMA Network Inc., is open to selling its stake in the top-earning broadcast company to any investor who can make an attractive offer.

Joel Jimenez, the family's representative in the GMA 7 board, on Thursday said that the family had been approached by several interested investors, including Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"But so far, nobody had made an offer we cannot refuse," Jimenez said in an interview. "So we are still here."

Jimenez said that there had been scheduled "discussions" with Pangilinan but these did not materialize.

Since the family had relinquished management control of GMA 7 to the two other controlling shareholders—the family of Gilberto Duavit with 35 percent, and the family of Felipe Gozon with 30 percent—the Jimenez family viewed its equity in Channel 7 purely as an investment play, according to Joel, who is also GMA 7 senior vice president for marketing.

This is the reason why the family has refused to sign the shareholders agreement, specifying that control of the company must remain with the existing shareholders, he added.

The agreement means that the three founding families must hold on to their GMA 7 stocks even after the planned initial public offering. Without the shareholders agreement, the IPO slated in the first semester could not proceed, according to GMA 7 officials.

The fierce rival of the ABS-CBN network was supposed to sell as much as 30 percent of its shares to the public to raise about P9 billion.

"We want the IPO to happen ... It's just that, we want to be able to trade our shares when we want to," Jimenez said. "The shareholders agreement requires us to hold on to the shares far longer than the six months mandated by the SEC."

Jimenez explained that such an agreement among the GMA 7 shareholders would defeat the purpose of going public.

Sources said the Duavits and the Gozons were worried about losing control of GMA 7 to another party that could gain the upper hand by joining forces with a minority shareholder.

Jimenez said such a scenario was possible but unlikely. "We trust that the sale of the stocks would be well-dispersed."

ATR Kim Eng and Deutsche Bank had been tapped to underwrite the offering.

"Our family is not after control anymore," Jimenez said. "My dad (Menardo Sr.) is busy with several family businesses. For us, GMA 7 is a financial play which we would hold onto while it is providing us a good return. But once we get an offer we cannot refuse or find other higher yielding investments, then we would sell it."

Plus, he said, in the Philippines, you would never know what would happen next. So, being locked-up with an investment is not ideal.

GMA earned about P1.5 billion last year, surpassing ABS-CBN substantially in terms of profit. This is the reason why many stock market investors are waiting for the IPO.

"I am very vocal about the excellent job that Uncle Henry (Gozon) and Jimmy (Duavit) have done with GMA," Jimenez said. "In fairness to them, they are really doing a good job."

Felipe Gozon and Menardo Jimenez Sr. are brothers-in-law. Gozon's sister is married to Jimenez.

4 SM SUPERMALLS ON SALE FOR 3 DAYS!

FOUR SM Supermalls are offering shoppers big end-to-end savings during their simultaneous 3-day sale event on March 18, 19 and 20.

SALE SHOPPING starts from 10 am to 10 pm at SM City Sta. Mesa, SM Supercenter Sucat, SM City Dasmariñas and SM City Fairview.

The mid-March weekend event at four SM Supermalls gives southsiders (as far as Cavite), northsiders and inner city residents the chance to take advantage of the big, big discounts on wide selections mallwide.

For the picking at up to 50% price breaks are great choices on apparel, fashion accessories, shoes, bags, luggage, home furnishings, sports gear, IT gadgets and gizmos, big and small appliances, toys, home improvement tools, personal and healthcare products.

Exciting raffle prizes are at stake for lucky shoppers. Every P500 single or accumulated purchase at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket, Super SM Hypermarket, or any participating mall establishment gives shoppers the chance to win in the draws on March 18, 19 and 20.

Rush to SM City Dasmariñas for really great buys! The newest shopping mecca in Cavite, SM City Dasmariñas located along Governor's Drive in Brgy. Sampaloc.

Visit SM City Fairview during the 3-DAY SALE for great discounts and a superb shopping experience.

The recently opened Annex at SM City Fairview gives northsiders 100 more reason (stores) to shop particularly during the 3-day sale event. In addition to the raffle prizes, SM Bowling Center Fairview invites bowlers to "Play All You Can" in a lane at special rates. Bring your kids to SM Storyland Fairview for a wonderful time while you shop.

SM City Dasmariñas and SM City Fairview are giving away the following per mall:

4 units Sony MHC-GN90D-DVD Mini Component
4 units Sony AR212N60 - 53.34 cm. (21") Color TVs

Bring the whole family as you shop for loads of discounts at the SM Supercenter Sucat! Take advantage of specially marked down prices on fresh meat and veggies, canned goods, fruits and processed delicacies. Never forget the line-up of fashion casuals, personal care products, household and kitchen appliances, and more!

Get ready to dig into piles and piles of fashion and novelties at marked down prices! Check out SM Department Store for great discounts on shoes, sandals, bags, accessories, stationeries, undergarments and much more. SM City Sta. Mesa (SM Centerpoint) is surely a haven for young shoppers.

SM Supercenter Sucat and SM City Sta. Mesa are giving away the following per mall:

6 units of SUZUKI SMASH 110 Motorcycles

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SIMPLE pleasures /D1

LIFESTYLE

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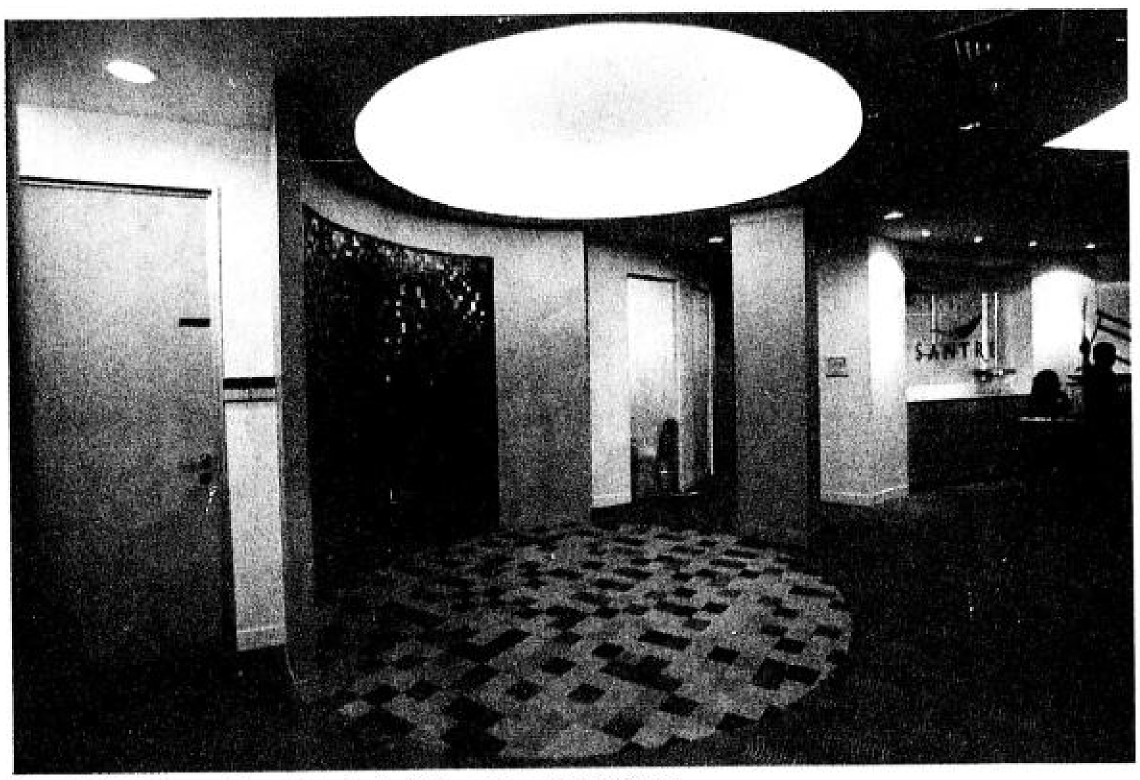
or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY



MODERN interiors make a visit to the institute a pleasant experience.

Institut Santre's approach to looking and feeling good is holistic

CLEAN and contemporary sinks

THE lounge, with its padded leather chairs and adequate reading materials, is a posh waiting area.

For-men-only weight-loss program

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Rudy Esperas

GOING to the gym regularly may be an effective way to lose excess pounds and build muscles, but for men with problems in their metabolism additional intervention may be necessary.

Institut Santre, a newly opened "body-toning" center exclusively for men, introduced recently the so-called Omnivital Therapy System. Santre combines two French words meaning health and well-being. The institute reportedly blends Eastern and Western methods with European-designed machines that zero in on visceral fat.

Apart from affecting a person's looks, visceral fat or fat lodged deep inside a person's abdominal cavity has negative health effects.

Visceral fat may increase a person's risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and certain forms of cancer.

Exclusively for men

The institute took its cue from its principal, Hong Kong-based Mence Body Toning, in focusing exclusively on men. Mence has a network of body-toning clinics in Asia and the Pacific.

It's not a spa, says Marianne Joy Sia, one of the managing directors, although the institute's new and gleaming treatment center on Jupiter and Galaxy Streets in Makati (tel. 7595599) has a modern and squeaky-clean locker area with several circular and off-white shower stalls.

"This is a first of its kind in the Philippines," Sia says, "since no establishment exclusively addressed men's weight problems before."

Instead of massage rooms, Institut Santre has treatment rooms with beds attached to circular-shaped machines.

Inside the room, a trained therapist will wrap problem areas with a material that acts as a conductor of "bio-electric current."

Customized

Since no two persons' weight problems, genetic makeup and lifestyles are alike, every therapy or body course is customized to suit one's needs.

The Omnivital Therapy System seeks to improve a person's lymphatic circulation to enhance his metabolism, release and burn fat and redefine the body through muscle toning. In due time, a number of health problems are also addressed.

The lymphatic system primarily consists of the lymph fluid, which flows within the lymphatic vessels, bone marrow and certain organs.

The system has three major functions: to drain fluids from the body's tissues and wash away cellular debris, transport lipids (dietary fats) from the gastrointestinal tract to the blood, and boost the body's defense system.

Aside from zeroing in on a person's stomach area, each machine is designed to target

FOR MEN/ C4

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Diffuse thinning of hair all over the head

Moderate hair loss on the crown or hairline

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Woman AT Svenson

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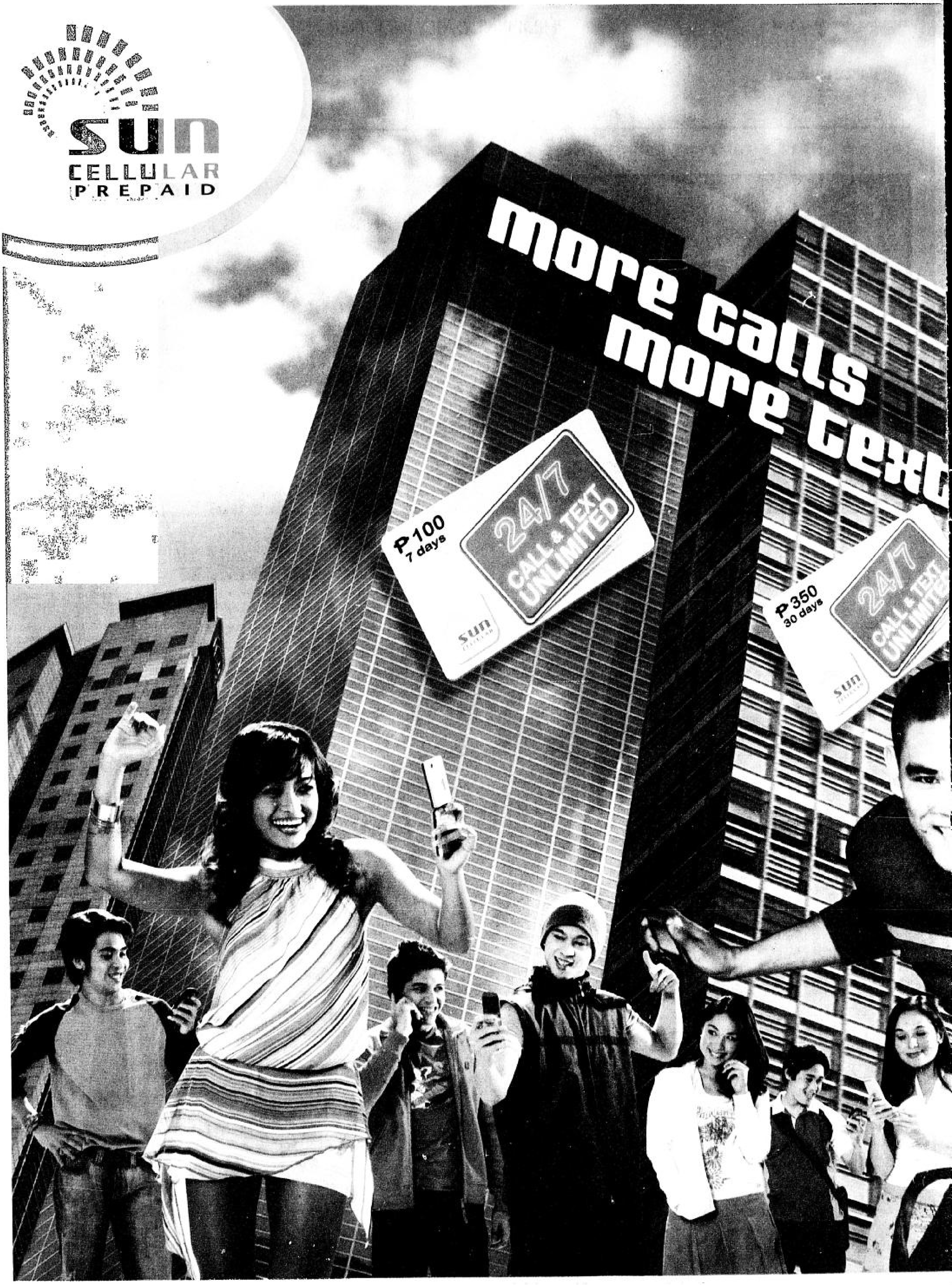
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0576, Series of 2005.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₱100	7 days
₱350	30 days

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Better Network. Better Value.

Do our beliefs about physical reality need revision?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

MANY strange phenomena are happening in all parts of the world.

Some have been reported by meticulous researchers and writers like Ripley in his "Believe It or Not" series and Charles Fort. Before them, there was Sir James Frazer who recorded strange beliefs and practices of people around the world in his monumental 19th century classic book "The Golden Bough."

It is not unusual that even such great pioneers in science as Sir Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison, Sir William Crookes, William James and Carl Jung engaged for a time in the study of strange phenomena.

As they defy the human laws of science and logic, strange phenomena have been, for the most part, ignored or neglected by orthodox and conservative scientists, despite mounting evidence of their reality.

Downplayed

Science and religion have always attempted to downplay or even deny them, although they continue to be experienced by people who initially did not believe in them.

Let me just cite a few strange events or occurrences as I remember them.

1. In a doctor's house in Quezon City, the bulb of a table lamp suddenly disappeared without anybody removing it from its housing. Later, the same bulb was found under the twin bed of the room.

In that same house, the blouse of the doctor's granddaughter disappeared. Diligent effort to locate the missing clothing proved futile. The house had no cats or other pets and the wind was not strong enough to blow the dress away. Later, the same blouse was found at the roots of a *santol* tree outside the house.

A few days after that, the household was shocked to see the contents of their refrigerator scattered on the floor, as if someone took them all out to eat. No member of the family nor the household help did it.

Upon investigation by our paranormal consultant, it was discovered that the strange incidents were the work of black or negative dwarves or elementals. A ritual was then conducted to get rid of them.

2. A mother died in the morning. In the afternoon, the daughter went to her mother's favorite *modista* to have her funeral dress ordered. When she talked to the dressmaker, she was told that a lady answering to the description of her mother already went there that morning and ordered the same funeral dress for her mother.

3. The general manager of a large company, whose headquarters is in Makati, entered the board room early one morning. No one was in the room then. The chairs were on top of the big conference table.

All of a sudden, one of the big chairs levitated or floated in the air by itself, flew away from him and crashed against the wall with a loud noise. The startled GM rushed out of the room and excitedly called the human resources manager to tell him what he had just witnessed.

The HR manager, after listening intently to the story, confessed that for the last two years since the company transferred to that place, many employees had been experiencing strange incidents. The GM asked the HR manager to consult me. That's how I came to know of this case.

4. A Catholic priest, who was the head of a secondary school south of Manila, died suddenly one morning. That same afternoon, the priest approached the school's security guard and asked for the key to his room, which the guard kept. After giving the key, the guard saw the priest enter his room.

Shortly afterwards, the bell at the front gate of the school rang. The guard went to open the gate. He saw it was a funeral car followed by several cars. He asked who had died. He was told it was the head of the school.

"That cannot be," the guard said. "I saw Fr. so and so only a few minutes ago. He even asked me for the key to his room. He is there right now."

When they entered the priest's room it was empty. The guard, who couldn't believe what happened, looked at the casket and was shocked to see the same priest he talked to earlier lying inside. He ran in great panic out of the school premises and was never heard from again.

There are many more stories I can tell, but the above are sufficient to show that we live in a strange and wonderful world. The explanations of science of what constitutes the nature of the physical reality are not adequate. And, in fact, may even be wrong in some instances.

Yet these explanations are the only ones accepted as valid and true. All the rest are considered paranormal, anomalous, or out-of-this world.

But are they? Is it possible that it is our explanation that is out-of-this world? That our commonly held beliefs about the nature of the physical reality need some drastic revisions?

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail: jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program, 7-8 p.m. every Sunday.

For-men-only weight-loss program

From page C1

less-entrenched fat in fat-prone zones like thighs, upper arms and chest.

"The duration of each course," says Sia, "will depend on your needs as well as your goals."

Baseline data

Before getting into any program, clients will undergo Institut Santre's "body analyzer," a machine that determines among other things stress level, body fat percentage and liquid retention.

After getting such vital statistics as weight, height, age and body frame, a lifestyle consultant gets the client's medical history. Doctors are available for further consultations.

"We address the root cause of the problem," says fellow managing director Stephanie de los Santos. "Working out may only heighten muscle mass, but not necessarily break down fat."

The Omnivital Therapy subscribes to the principle that the body has the inherent ability to regulate itself often without the use of drugs or surgery. Institut Santre doesn't prescribe diet drugs or resort to invasive forms of fat reduction like liposuction.

The therapy also doesn't prohibit clients from going to the gym while undergoing treatment.

Clients will have to work only with a cardio machine, however, says de los Santos. Building muscles through weight training, while the therapy tries to break down fat, is counterproductive.

To avoid any complications, persons with pacemakers and extensive metal parts in their bodies (hip replacement, for example) are discouraged from participating in the program.

Different approach

Though body-toning therapies have been around for decades, Sia says what sets Institut Santre apart is its approach.

Aside from treating the problem the Western way via drugs and equipment, therapists try to strengthen a client's system with Eastern remedies like herbal medication and acupressure.

"To fix an external problem," says Sia, "we have to fix the internal one first. By stimulating internal circulation through acupressure massage, we get rid of the blockages. This is totally different from massages you get in the spa. Ours is geared towards the improvement of lymph and blood circulation."

Institut Santre's approach to looking and feeling good is holistic. It also offers facial courses that promise clients a more youthful glow. A typical facial course consists of 12 treatments.

And as a sanctuary for stressed-out gentlemen, cell phones have no place inside treatment rooms.

At first, not a few clients protested this rule, but they eventually appreciated the reason for it. Every guy deserves a break if only for an hour or two.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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color may vary from actual unit
DVD MINI COMPONENT or COLOR TV

THE LATEST on back pain /D3

LIFESTYLE

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Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Simple pleasures

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

UNWIND—you owe it to yourself. More often than not, it is a prescription to living longer and better.

Breathe. It's the simplest way to show you are alive.

Oxygen and good breathing go hand in hand. Though most do not know exactly how to breathe to get enough air in, they inhale and exhale as a fundamental form of survival.

Truth is, we don't fully utilize the maximum capacity of our lungs, and in the process deny our bodies the great benefits of breathing correctly. A direct benefit is instant relaxation. Notice that your breathing is shallow and short when you are stressed and tense. You are unable to think straight, you lack balance, your action erratic, your mood irritable.

Good breathing guarantees a balance of mind and body.

Breathing right

The goal is to take in as much oxygen as you can. Know that the average person only uses 1/3 of his/her lung capacity. Try to improve this by:

1. Sitting comfortably or lying down, supporting your lower back if needed.
2. Putting your hands on your tummy with fingertips lightly touching it.
3. Breathing through your nose as slowly as you can to a count of five. As you inhale, feel your stomach expand and also note that your fingertips will separate.
4. Trying to hold your breath for three counts then start exhaling slowly through the mouth to a count of five (some can use the combination inhale four—hold four—exhale eight).
5. Repeating as often as possible.
6. Making this your morning and evening regimen (or any time you feel exhausted).

You may feel strange but that's okay. Within minutes, you will feel better. An ideal breathing exercise is 10 breaths each time. This is called controlled breathing. Those who have difficulty sleeping can try this to ensure a good night's sleep.

Affirming life

Would you like to feel good in an instant? Feeling down and out can be reversed just with your willful desire to transform your depression to delight. Practice the art of affirmation. You've heard it before—"If you hear something often enough, you begin to believe it." So, instead of hearing it from someone else, why not tell it to yourself? An affirmation is believing that something is real by invoking it.

Before making an affirmation, be clear about your goal or what you want to happen to yourself. It can cover anything that is ideal to your job, money, success, love, health, peace of mind...

Remember that all affirmations must be positive, personal and brief.

Examples:

- I deserve to pamper myself today.
- My body is healthy.
- I have peace of mind.
- I feel great.
- I am a loving person and I attract loving people in my life.
- I deserve a better job.
- I declare a better life for myself.

Write down your affirmations—just in case you forget them. If at any time you say your affirmations and doubt sets in, stop. Breathe. Feel all the positive energy inside you. Then say your affirmation again. The strength and power of affirmations depend on your belief that they are already yours, or will be yours—that they are true or coming true for you.

Visualize now. Soon you will begin to notice subtle changes in your own consciousness and state of mind. Even people around you will notice something different about you. That something is your positive state of being.

Relax

Relaxation is as much a state of body as well as a state of mind. The physical is always influenced by the mental. Body-mind team work is needed in order to reach a perfect state of relaxation. Here are some tips:

- Make a list of all the things you've wanted to do.
- Sit in a quiet corner, find a cozy chair.
- Sip your favorite beverage—a cup of coffee or tea. Keep it by your side.
- Add stars to your list. The more the stars, the greater the priority.
- Now you have made a list of your goals, dreams, wishes...

Other simple things you can do:

- Do nothing. Declare today a do nothing, no effort day.
- Read a good book.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Take a walk in a park.
- Be with children. Their laughter is an instant mood-lifter.
- Be happy with yourself.
- Have a good soak in the bath. Mix in your favorite aromatherapy oils. Try five drops of lavender oil.
- Smile at your reflection in the mirror. Affirm: "Life is good."

Make mental pictures

Watching a movie or looking at photographs are things we normally do. How about making mental pictures of our affirmations? Imagine as you affirm that the photo or movie in your mind is your affirmation come true.

Love and light!

Reference: Detox Yourself
By: Jane Scrivner

Nestlé launches "Let's Talk Wellness," a nationwide campaign to be well and healthy.

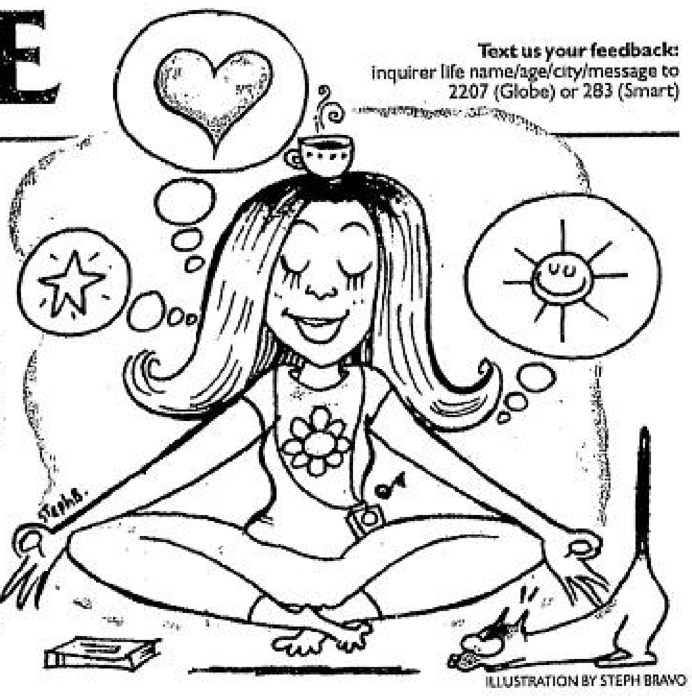


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

ALAM MO ANAK, ITO YUNG LAGI KONG DALA NUNG BATA PA AKO.
BAON NIYA YAN NUNG NAG-LITTLE MS. PHILIPPINES SIYA...
CHOCOLAIT
ONE OF THE FEW THINGS YOU'D LOVE TO SHARE WITH YOUR KIDS. THE CREAMY CHOCOLAITY TASTE OF THE ORIGINAL CHOCOLAIT!

PHILIPPINES
HealthToday
12 keys
heart attack gotten you down?
speak easy
bring out the best in your kids!
IMAGINE THAT!
cycling 101
chill out, hot head!
control your temper fast
face off!
PLUS!
healing spaces
tips to help you create a tranquil bedroom
Iza Calzado
less is more

Mag reports on Iza's battle with the bulge

THIS month, HealthToday reports on how emotions affect people's health, relationship with loved ones, and outlook in life.

Read how Iza Calzado solved her weight problems through discipline and positive thinking.

The magazine also reports how parents handle adversity and how their children will cope with grief and loss.

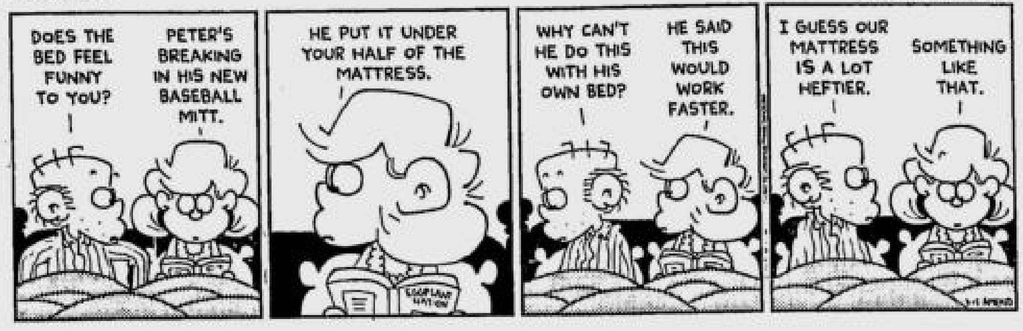
Experts reveal that after a heart attack or major heart surgery, some patients develop clinical depression. The United States National Mental Health Association (NMHA) estimates that depression occurs in between 40-65 percent of patients who have had a heart attack.

Read the complete articles in the March issue of HealthToday available in all bookstores, newsstands, and retail outlets nationwide. Call 8860333 local 112 or e-mail enquiry.ph@asia.cmpmedica.com.

my summer colors
at the infants' & children's wear departments
we've got it all for you this summer!
SM
DEPARTMENT STORE

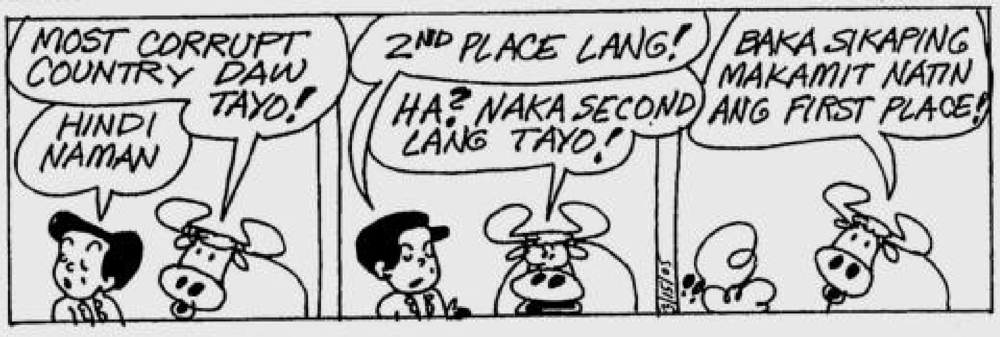
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


DOES THE BED FEEL FUNNY TO YOU?
PETER'S BREAKING IN HIS NEW BASEBALL MITT.
HE PUT IT UNDER YOUR HALF OF THE MATTRESS.
WHY CAN'T HE DO THIS WITH HIS OWN BED?
HE SAID THIS WOULD WORK FASTER.
I GUESS OUR MATTRESS IS A LOT HEFTIER.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

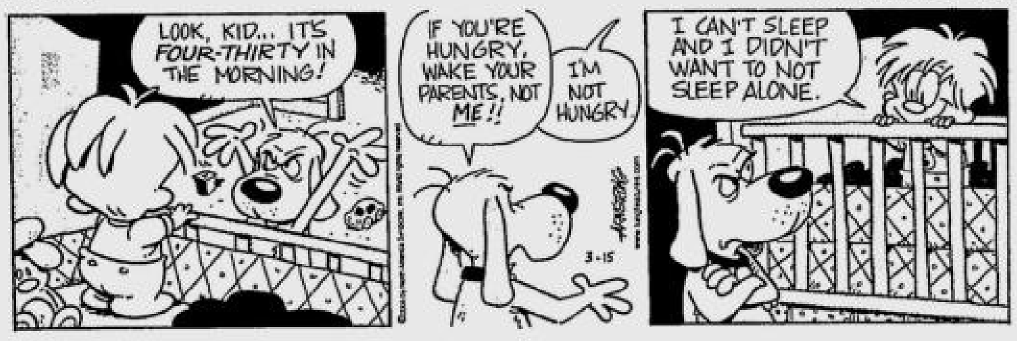
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MOST CORRUPT COUNTRY DAW TAYO!
HINDI NAMAN
2ND PLACE LANG!
HA? NAKA SECOND LANG TAYO!
BAKA SIKAPING MAKAMIT NATIN ANG FIRST PLACE!

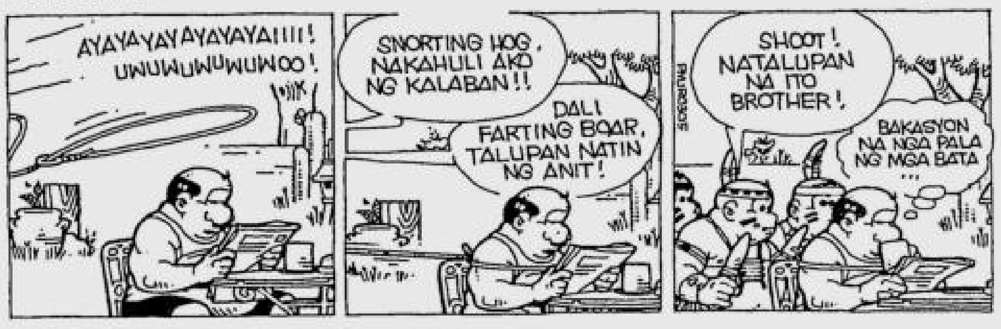
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


LOOK, KID... IT'S FOUR-THIRTY IN THE MORNING!
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, WAKE YOUR PARENTS, NOT ME!!
I'M NOT HUNGRY.
I CAN'T SLEEP AND I DIDN'T WANT TO NOT SLEEP ALONE.
3-15

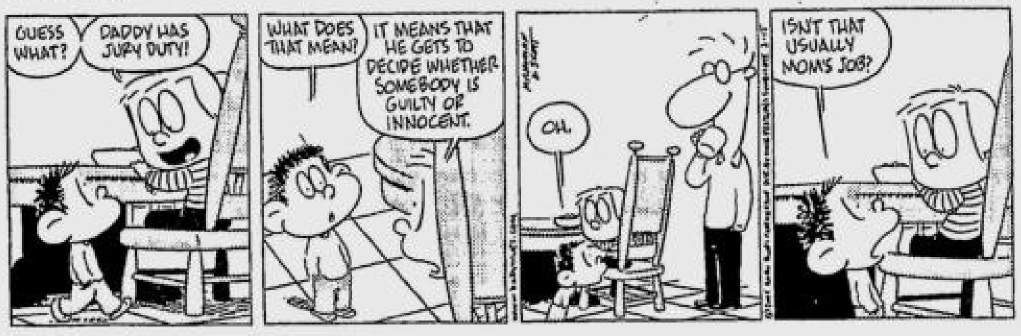
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


AYAYAYAYAYAYAYAI!!!! UWUWUWUWUWOO!
SNORTING HOG, NAKAHULI AKO NG KALABAN!!
DALI FARTING BOAR, TALUPAN NATIN NG ANIT!
SHOOT! NATALUPAN NA ITO BROTHER!
BAKASYON NA NGA PALA NG MGA BATA ...

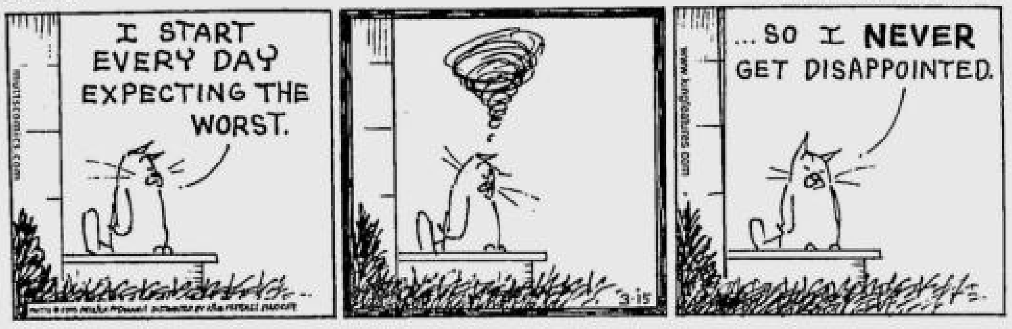
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


GUESS WHAT?
DADDY HAS JURY DUTY!
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
IT MEANS THAT HE GETS TO DECIDE WHETHER SOMEBODY IS GUILTY OR INNOCENT.
OH.
ISN'T THAT USUALLY MOM'S JOB?

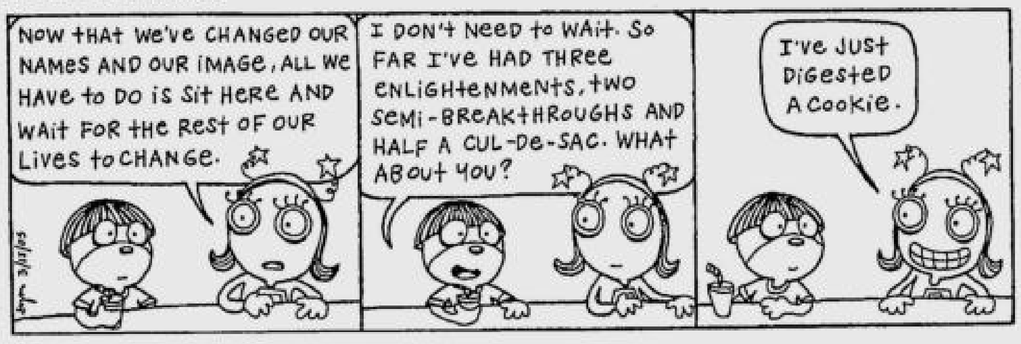
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I START EVERY DAY EXPECTING THE WORST.
... SO I NEVER GET DISAPPOINTED.
3-15

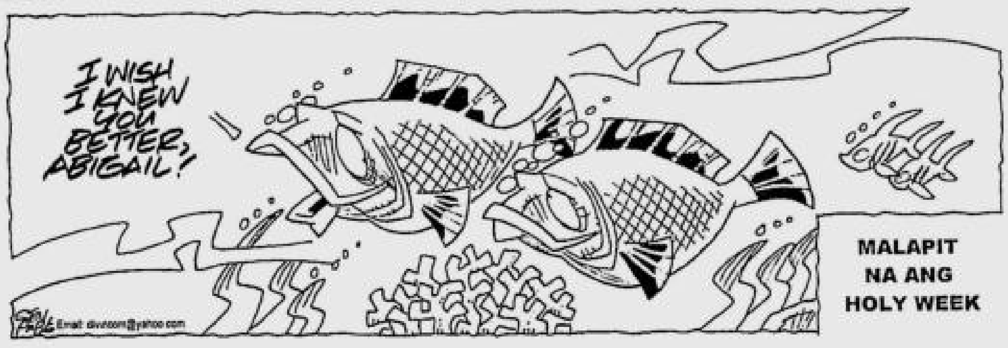
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Now that we've CHANGED OUR NAMES AND OUR IMAGE, ALL WE HAVE to DO is Sit HERE AND WAit FOR tHE Rest OF OUR Lives to CHANGE.
I DON't Need to WAit. So FAR I've HAD THRee ENLIGHtenMents, two SeMi-BREAKtHROUGHS AND HALF A CUL-De-SAC. WHAt ABout you?
I've Just Digested A Cookie.

DIVINE COMEDY

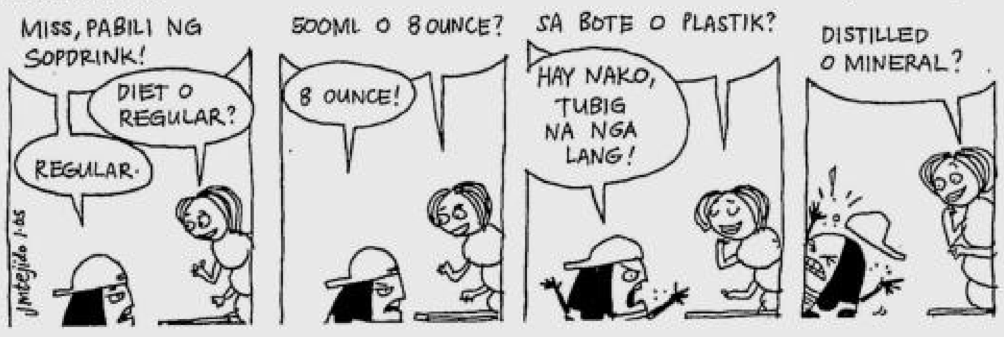
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I WISH I KNEW YOU BETTER, ABIGAIL!

MALAPIT NA ANG HOLY WEEK

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MISS, PABILI NG SOPDRINK!
DIET O REGULAR?
REGULAR.
500ML O 8 OUNCE?
8 OUNCE!
SA BOTE O PLASTIK?
HAY NAKO, TUBIG NA NGA LANG!
DISTILLED O MINERAL?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are both ambitious and enthusiastic. This combination serves you well, and it allows you to generate support for what you do. Therefore, self-employment is as easy to pursue as working for someone else. Some of you climb in a literal sense, in terms of mountains, etc. Increased solitude this year will help you learn something new.

Birthdate of: Judd Hirsch, actor; David Cronenberg, director; Park Overall, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Research behind the scenes or when dealing with government agencies can help you deal with your family, real estate or old-age security. Keep working on this.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good time to make long-term plans with friends, especially artistic, younger friends. Helpful input from groups is also a possibility.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Take a moment to think about what you want to be doing 10 years from now. What do you have to do this month to start making this a reality?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good week to make practical plans related to future education and training, medical matters, travel, dealing with foreign countries plus everything having to do with publishing and the media.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is the time to be practical about debt, taxes and insurance matters. It's also a good time to make important decisions about how to deal with shared property.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Discussions with a friend who is older or more experienced can benefit you now. Why not learn something from those who have gone before you?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good day for practical work. You want to make things look nice, but at the same time, they must function efficiently.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an excellent time to make solid, practical plans related to children and taking care of children. (Some of you might also fall in love with someone older.)

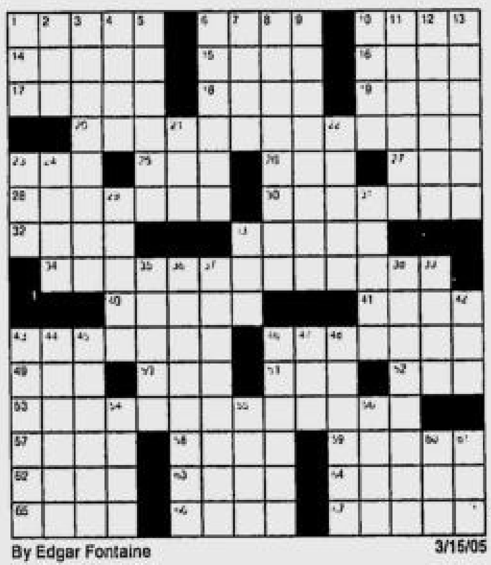
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Iron out details with others about family businesses, shared property and family real estate. It's also a good time to make decisions about taking care of older family members.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a busy time for you! Mars in your sign keeps you active, and the Sun and Venus make you want to communicate with others now. Older people are willing to listen to you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Whatever you buy now will be practical and will last a long time. You're thinking about your long-term future. You're also making practical decisions about work.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a strong time for you. You can be very successful working with groups. You're also making sensible, long-term decisions at work. Bravo!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Edgar Fontaine
Dighton, MA

3/15/05

ACROSS
1 Formal agreements
6 Juanita's house
10 __ d'oeuvres
14 Cornhusker's city
15 Door to get ore?
16 Deseret, today
17 Boutonniere's place
18 Close by, old-style
19 Parks on a bus
20 Socrates' conclusion
23 Bart Simpson's grandpa
25 Contend
26 Draw
27 Global positioning fig.
28 Bore
30 Kibbutz resident
32 __ podrida
33 Up to that time
34 Object of ridicule
40 Mindless worker
41 Busted clods
43 Sweet after you eat
46 Arrive ahead of time
49 Funnyman Carney
50 Vane dir.
51 Old cloth
52 Lummox
53 Like country-store gossip
57 Ring of light
58 Doggone it!
59 Chart holder
62 Toiling away
63 Frosted
64 Act part
65 In one's right mind
66 Abbr. after deducting tare
67 Shadow cast

DOWN
1 PAC beneficiary
2 Doctors' org.
3 A __ (without musical support)
4 Kojak's first name
5 Mouth moistener
6 Went by dugout
7 Tennis situation, for short
8 Observation
9 Disbelievers
10 Throw
11 "The Lion in Winter" star
12 Scalawag
13 Consort of Shiva
21 Titled Brit
22 Deserve
23 Ruckus
24 Male moose
29 Acclaims
31 Hi, in HI
33 One in an ecole
35 Hellenic
36 Intruded
37 Correlate
38 WWII battle site
39 Common seaweed
42 Woad or anil
43 Russian villas
44 Mistakes list
45 Soviet dictator
46 Willy of Germany
47 Corn unit
48 Emergence
54 Shelter for sheep
55 Make beer or coffee
56 Apiece
60 Put a stop to
61 Spike of films

Monday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	T	C	H	■	V	C	R	S	■	A	J	A	R
U	S	U	R	Y	■	C	H	O	O	■	C	O	R	A
S	T	R	E	P	■	H	A	U	L	■	T	H	E	M
P	I	N	C	H	H	I	T	T	E	R	■	N	A	P
■	■	■	H	E	A	P	■	■	M	O	H	R	■	■
D	E	P	E	N	D	■	R	I	N	G	S	I	D	E
E	R	O	S	■	O	H	I	O	■	E	N	T	E	R
C	O	L	■	K	N	I	T	T	E	R	■	T	I	M
O	D	E	O	N	■	L	E	A	F	■	M	E	S	A
R	E	S	P	E	C	T	S	■	R	E	A	R	M	S
■	■	■	I	S	L	A	■	■	N	E	X	T	■	■
T	N	T	■	T	R	A	N	S	M	I	T	T	E	R
R	O	T	S	■	O	B	E	Y	■	S	H	A	M	U
O	L	E	O	■	L	I	M	N	■	T	E	R	M	S
N	L	R	B	■	E	E	O	C	■	S	W	E	A	T

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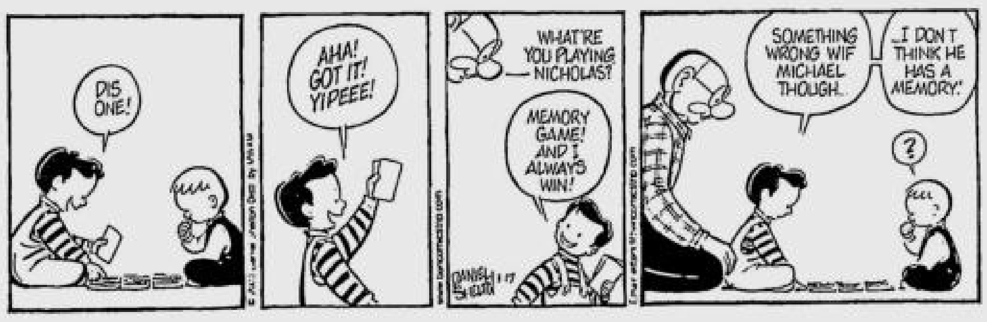
3/15/05

GASFAR
fuel saving tips
CHECK FUEL TANKS/ TANK LINES
Check fuel tank lines for leaks and irregularities. Keep the fuel cap tightened to prevent fuel loss due to evaporation and spillage.

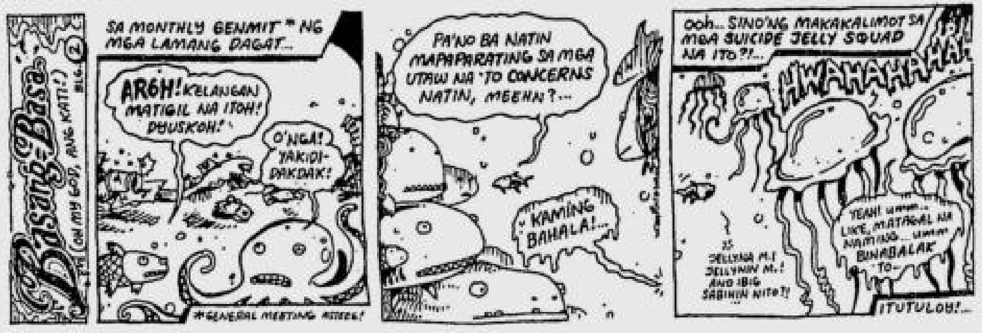
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


DIS ONE!
AHA! GOT IT! YIPEEE!
WHAT'RE YOU PLAYING NICHOLAS?
MEMORY GAME! AND I ALWAYS WIN!
SOMETHING WRONG WIF MICHAEL THOUGH.
...I DON'T THINK HE HAS A MEMORY.
?

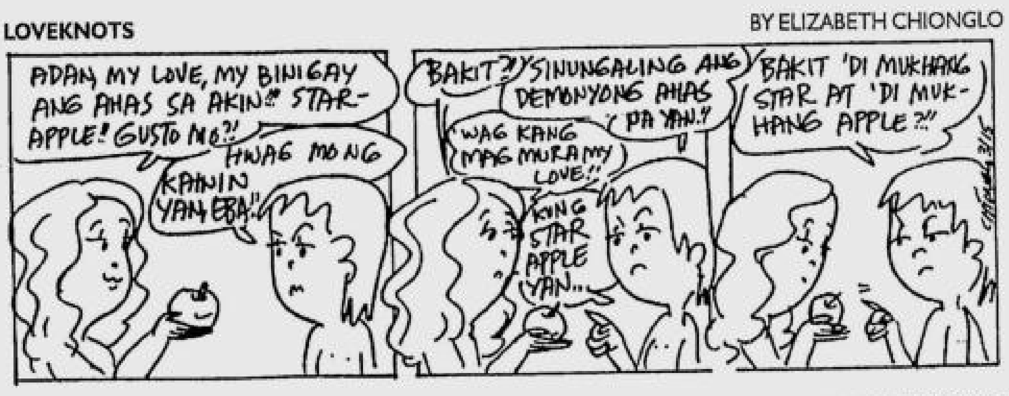
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


Basang-Basa
(OH MY GOD, ANG KATI!) BLG. 2
SA MONTHLY GENMIT* NG MGA LAMANG DAGAT...
ARGH! KELANGAN MATIGIL NA ITOH! DYUSKOH!
O'NGA! YAKIDIDAKDAK!
*GENERAL MEETING ATEEE!
PA'NO BA NATIN MAPAPARATING SA MGA UTAW NA 'TO CONCERNS NATIN, MEEHN?...
KAMING BAHALA!...
ooh... SINO'NG MAKAKALIMOT SA MGA SUICIDE JELLY SQUAD NA ITO?!...
HWAHAHAHAHA!
JELLYNA M.! JELLYNIN M.! ANO IBIG SABIHIN NITO?!
YEAH! umm... LIKE, MATAGAL NA NAMING... umm BINABALAK TO-
ITUTULOY!...

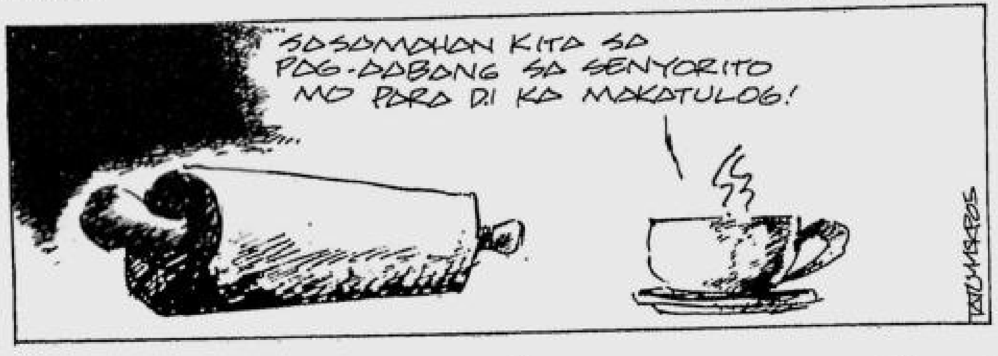
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ADAN MY LOVE, MY BINIGAY ANG AHAS SA AKIN!! STAR-APPLE! GUSTO MO?!
HWAG MONG KAININ YAN EBA!!
BAKIT?!
SINUNGALING ANG DEMONYONG AHAS PA YAN.!
WAG KANG MAG MURA MY LOVE!!
KING STAR APPLE YAN...
BAKIT 'DI MUKHANG STAR AT 'DI MUKHANG APPLE ?!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SOSOMOHON KITA SA PAG-PABONG SA SENYORITO MO PARA DI KA MAKATULOG!

Bed rest may not relieve lower back pain

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

LOWER back pain can be mysterious. In majority of cases, the causes are unknown.

Sometimes, the physical evidence does not match the presence or absence of pain. Some people have chronic back pain but do not have any sign of internal damage while others who have never had back pain discover that they have a bulging vertebral disk or some other structural problem that should be causing them pain.

Some people with very tight hamstrings (believed to be a common cause of back pain) have perfectly normal lower backs while others who have flexible hamstrings have back problems.

One thing for sure, lower back pain is a common experience for many people. Someone even said it was the price humans paid for walking on two legs.

Here is a small compilation of the latest research on the prevention and treatment of lower back pain. It is not a substitute for professional advice but simply information that lower back pain sufferers may find interesting.

Always consult your doctor for appropriate treatment and therapy for your specific type of lower back problem.

Muscle coordination

Strengthening the abdominal and back muscles has long been a rule in the treatment of lower back pain. But experts do not agree on what strengthening exercises are best. Some believe exercises can put a great amount of pressure on the spinal disks.

Danish researchers discovered that smooth coordination of the back muscles is just as important as having strong and flexible muscles. In their three-month study of 40 people ages 18-65 with chronic back pain, those who did special exercises that did not strengthen the back but developed better coordination of the trunk muscles had just as good results in terms of less back pain and better back mobility as the group that did the traditional back strengthening exercises.

If you want to know how to do coordination exercises, check out the article by Owen Anderson in Sports Injury Bulletin in http://www.sportsinjurybulletin.com/archive/0033-lower-back-pain.htm.

Medium firm mattress

A 2003 study published in The Lancet found that medium firm mattresses were better at relieving lower back pain while lying in bed and upon rising than firm mattresses. This is contrary to the common belief that firm, hard mattresses are best. (Spring mattresses were used in the three-month study so results could be different for other types of mattresses).

On a scale of one-10, with 10 being the softest, medium firm mattresses were rated five-six while firm mattresses were rated two-three. Neither participants nor researchers knew who got which type of mattress.

In a review of the study, Dr. Richard Glickman-Simon wrote, "Since you spend about one-third of your life lying down on a mattress, it makes sense that the type of mattress you have could affect your lower back."

Forgiveness and depression

It has been documented that chronic pain can lead to depression but a 2003 University of Alberta study found that the opposite could also be true. Researchers discovered that people with depression were four times as likely to develop severe neck and lower back pain than people who were not depressed.

Meanwhile, a 2004 Duke University study found that among chronic back pain sufferers, those who had issues with unforgiveness had higher levels of pain and had more anger and depression than people who were more forgiving.

Back botox

The average person associates botox or botulinum toxin injections with wrinkles but botox has long been used to control muscle overactivity. It has also been found effective in easing migraines and keeping dry excessively sweaty armpits and hands.

According to a study presented at the 2000 Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology, botox injections may also help relieve chronic mechanical lower back pain. Neither doctors nor patients involved in the study knew who was getting the fake or real injections.

At three weeks, 11 of the 14 patients experienced 50 percent pain relief compared to only four of the 14 patients who did not

BED REST/ D4

A study found medium firm mattresses better than firm mattresses

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What emergency medical attention would I need for dog bites?

If confronted with a dog bite, the wound should immediately be scrubbed with soap and then flushed with water. If available, chemical cleansing using 1-4% of Benzalkonium chloride or 1% Centrimonium chloride is useful as these render inactivate the rabies virus. Antibiotic treatment may be considered if the time of wound cleaning or closure is after more than 24 hours from time of injury, for punctured wounds, for deep wounds involving tendons and bones and for facial wounds. Tetanus prophylaxis may also be given.

Dogs involved in unprovoked bites, exhibiting abnormal behavior or those suspected of being rabid should be humanely killed and sent to a laboratory for brain Fluorescent Antibody (FA) examination or Electron microscopic examination. If the examination of the brain is negative for rabies it can be assumed, that the saliva contains no virus and the exposed person need not be treated. Otherwise, the patient should receive active and passive immunization.

For bites from healthy dogs, the animal should immediately be captured, confined and observed for 10 days. If any illness or abnormal behavior develops during the observation period, it should be brought to a laboratory for examination.

Dr. Ruel S. Landicho answers this week's feature question on the emergency management of animal bites. 'Doc Ruel, as he is commonly addressed by his patients, is our accredited medical service provider at the Our Lady of Caysasay Hospital in Lemery, Batangas. He specializes in Internal Medicine and has been in this field for over seven years now. He is a graduate of Medicine from the Manila Central University and in 1997 finished his residency at the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. Medicard members may seek the consultation services of Dr. Ruel Landicho at Room 506, every Monday to Saturday, from 8 AM until 12 noon.

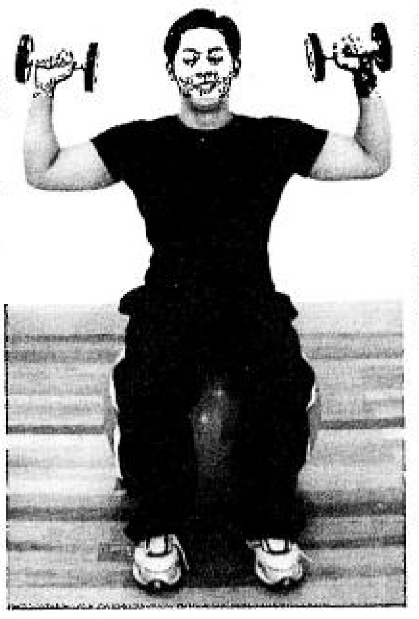
MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC., 9th floor Sagittarius Building H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Trunkline: 867-2020 Fax No.: 894-5770, 810-3855 Text: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4627 (Smart & Talk N' Text). E-mail: inquiry@medicardphils.com Website: www.medicardphils.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Overhead dumbbell press on stability ball



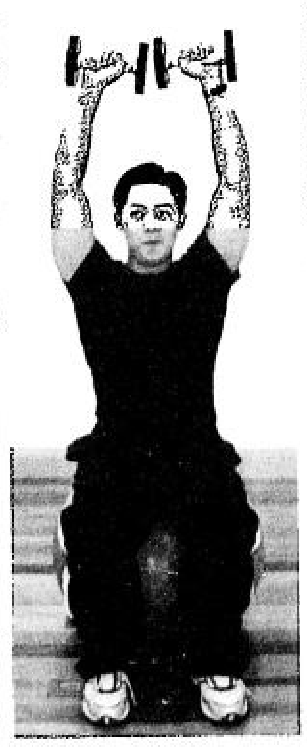
STRENGTHENS the front of the shoulders and the upper back while challenging the "core" muscles

Equipment:

Dumbbells and a stability ball This exercise can also be done seated on a chair or bench.

Exercise:

1. Sit on a stability ball with both feet flat on the floor.
2. Raise the dumbbells to the sides of your shoulders with the palms facing front.
3. Take a breath, hold it and keep your abdominals tight then smoothly lift the dumbbells overhead till your arms are straight, with the elbows just slightly bent. Exhale as soon as you pass the hardest part of the lift. (Holding your breath for just a split-second as you start the lift gives support to your spine).
4. Slowly lower the dumbbells to the starting position.

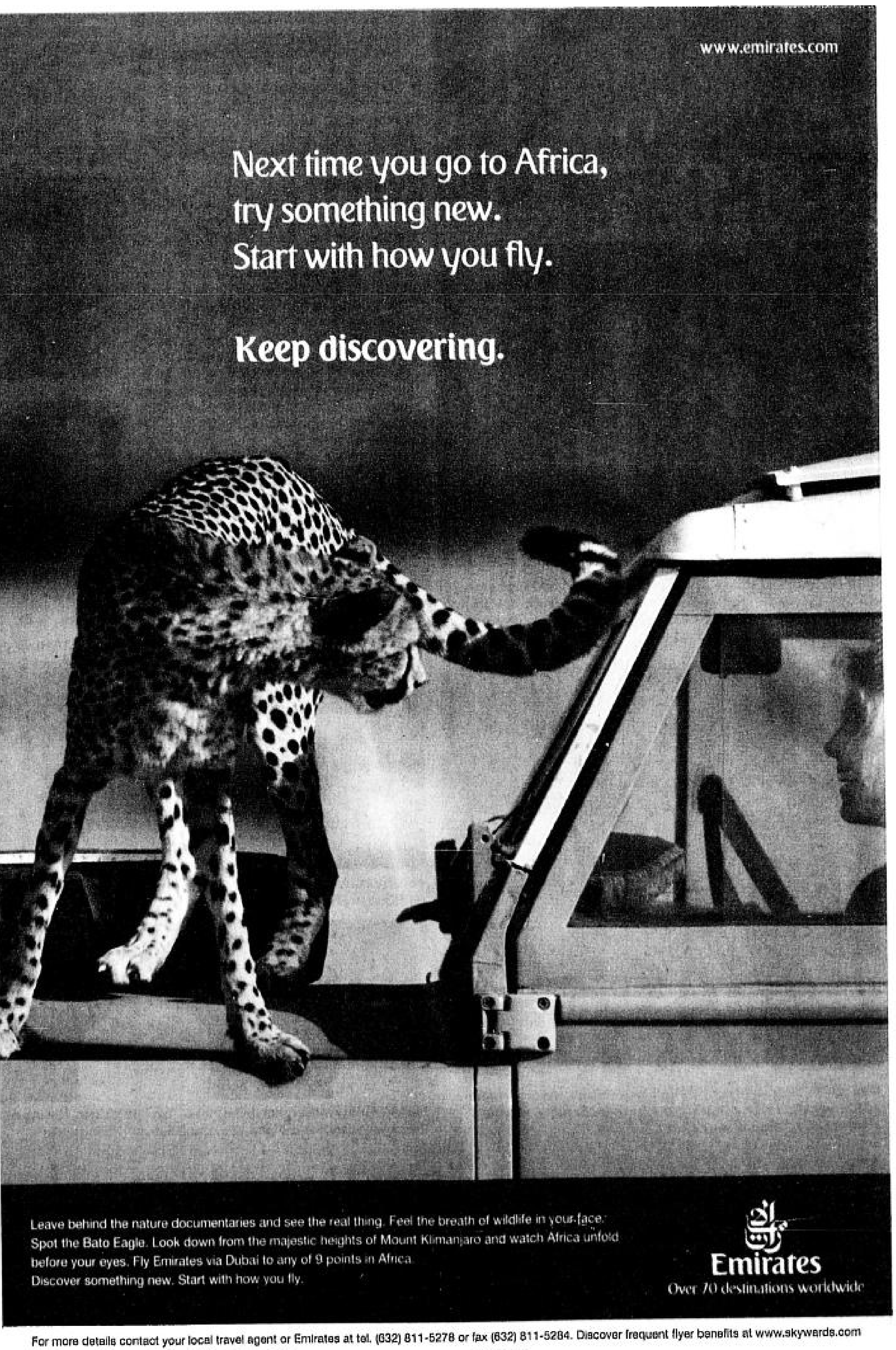


Performance tips:

1. Your arms are straight in the overhead position but be sure that you are not locking your elbow joint.
2. Do not allow the dumbbells to drift forward or backward in the overhead position.
3. In the uppermost position, your elbows should be next to your ears, not in front of them.
4. Keep your abdominals tight and do not allow your lower back to arch to lift the dumbbells up.
5. If you have chronic shoulder joint or lower back problems, avoid this exercise.

Repetitions:

12-15 repetitions



Leave behind the nature documentaries and see the real thing. Feel the breath of wildlife in your face. Spot the Bato Eagle. Look down from the majestic heights of Mount Kilimanjaro and watch Africa unfold before your eyes. Fly Emirates via Dubai to any of 9 points in Africa. Discover something new. Start with how you fly.

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CLOSE up time: Angel Aquino and Norby David

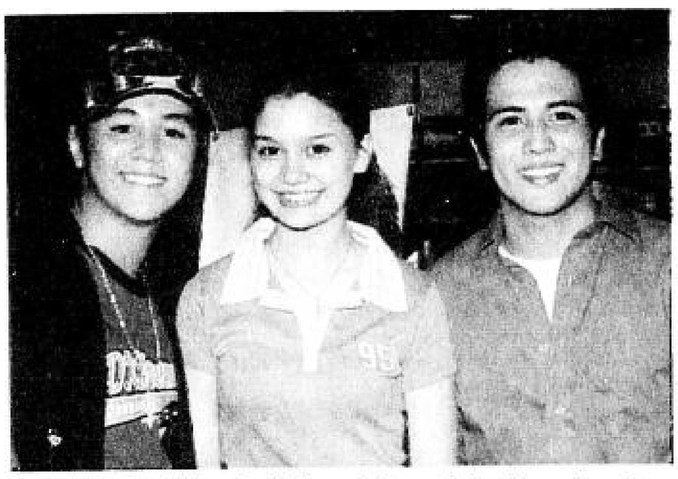
COOL pals: Denise Laurel and AJ Eigenmann

HEY GOOD-LOOKING: Club Pen endorser Dawn Balagot with Jake Cuenca

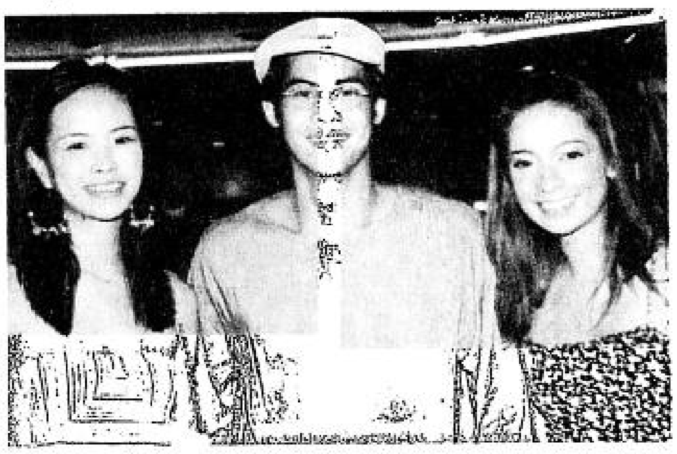
CYBER-SMART Sam Ortiz, Ayala Cinema's hot business development and marketing manager, with good-looking, tanned Illac Diaz

COLOR me yellow: Railey Valeroso and Chynna Ortaleza

A jump-from-your-seat experience



"CONSTANTINE" at the Glorietta 4 Cinema is their type of movie: Kirby, Nadine Samonte and Biboy Ramirez



HOT models: Fortune Santos with Paolo Paraiso and Nicolette Bell

DUSIT Hotel Nikko's secret weapons, director of food and beverage Gilbert Uy and director of finance May Bongay, with guests—defense attaché Col. Abdul Hadi Hussin and Dusit's director of sales for Japanese accounts, Koji Kawano

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

IF **KEANU Reeves** disappoints you, then *palanggas*, you are not his true fans.

But with his hit movie "Constantine," which Ayala Cinemas premiered recently at Glorietta 4 Cinema 3, like it or not, you'd end up a fan of Keanu R.

"Constantine" is based on a character from the DC comics "Hellblazer" series and features fantastic computer-generated special effects. It was a jump-from-your seat kind of experience for me. Glorietta 4 Cinema 3 definitely delivers with its THX-certified sound system. Its state-of-the art technology gets moviegoers really close to the action, and the vibration of the seats is unbelievable.

The "Constantine" premiere was attended by tons of hot, young and young-at-heart hip personalities.

The popular Cibo catered the cocktails, while Men's World raffled off shirts and ties from Van Heusen as well as caps, belt bags and CD cases from RayBan.

"With specially made interiors (including) plush seats and wall-to-wall carpeting, Ayala Cinemas provide an excellent cinematic experience and customer service that is simply without equal," said Ayala's beaming Sam Ortiz.

Yes, Ayala Cinemas is beyond movies.

Family affair

The famille **Ponce Enrile** celebrated what could be one of the highlights of their colorful history, *palanggas*. The elegant young matriarch of this leading political and business clan, *la muy simpatica* **Cristina Castañer Ponce Enrile**, literally celebrated her birthday with a bang on New Year's eve with that spitfire senator, brilliant **Juan Ponce Enrile**, no less.

A birthday Mass was held at the private chapel in the sprawling garden of the Enrile residence, with Fr. **Reynaldo Reyes** of the Binondo Parish officiating. It was followed by a short speech by the birthday gal, who was visibly moved by the outpouring of love. She thanked all those present, *palanggas*.

The popular Albergus served its famous hot-off-the-grill Tenderloin Steak *a la Pobre*, Almond-crusted Baked Salmon and Honey-roasted Chicken with Rosemary, plus other excellent yummies. But my personal favorites were Cristina's very own specialty, "*pose gallego*," a delectable Spanish stew made of ham, white beans and *chorizo*. *Delicioso*, dahlings.

Après dinner, at the stroke of midnight, there was a fireworks display and everyone put 12 grapes in their champagne flutes as they sang "Happy Birthday" to vivacious Cristina.

Sen. Enrile immediately gave his wife a birthday kiss to the delight and wild applause of everyone.

Cristina then blew out the candles on the birthday cake by **Sally Ponce Tesoro** on this grand celebration of another year of her beautiful life, dahlings.

Among the chosen invitees were former Sen. **Rene** and **Pining Espina**; super close pal since their school days in St. Paul, **Diana Fernandez Santos**, with her sons **Derrick** and **Duanne Santos**; **Evelyn Kocher-Lim**; **Myrna Panlilio Borromeo**; **Tonichi Nocom**; **Linda Yap**; Capt. **Ramon Flares**; mega eligible widowers **Ricky Cu-Unjieng** and **Ramon Manzano**; **Linda Salientes**; and **Mitos Schultze**, plus other chosen ones like them, *palanggas*.

Naturellement, Cristina's daughter, ravishing beauty and brains **Katrina** and her husband, well-liked businessman **James Kocher**, were there with their children. Cristina's grandchildren flew in from all over the world like **Karina** who took a break from her studies in Australia, **Kara** who arrived from Miami where she is helping run a new family business, and **Kriska** who jetted in from her home in Milan.

It was definitely a great way to start the new year, with romance in the air again for Cristina Ponce Enrile.

Yes, *palanggas*, I think, all's well that ends well, *n'est-ce pas*?

Cheers to my *palangga*, Cris.

INTO each other's arms forever, Sen. Johnny Ponce Enrile and his adorable wife, our queen for the day, Cristina Castañer P. E.

SEN. Juan Ponce Enrile, Cristina Ponce Enrile, with two of their beautiful grandchildren—Kara P. E. Conolly and Karina Ponce Enrile

EYE-CATCHING Enrile clan of movers and shakers: Kara P. E. Conolly, Kristen Ponce Enrile, Katrina Ponce Enrile Kocher, Kriska P. E. Bernasconi and JR Ponce Enrile

Fun party

That superior premier deluxe hotel in Makati, the popular Dusit Hotel Nikko, hosted a fun cocktail party for the super nice personas from the Embassy of Malaysia, *palanggas*.

The hotel's brilliant general manager **Ikuo Itoi**, no less, together with the hotel's hotshot directors and managers, welcomed the Ambassador, His Excellency **Iskandar Sarudin**, and his staff plus the embassy's other officers.

The affair began with a fun karaoke sing-along, *aprés* which everyone was treated to a wide range of excellently prepared food that included specialties from Thailand, Vietnam, Japan and Malaysia, *naturellement*. The Hotel's super talented and creative executive chef, Melchor Taylo, also prepared yummy spicy curry selections.

And one thing for sure, *palanggas*, it was one night of real fun and togetherness between Dusit Hotel Nikko and the Embassy of Malaysia.

BRILLIANT director of sales of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Melotte Mondelo, with the guest of honor, Ambassador Iskandor Sarudin, and Dusit's hotshot GM and host of the evening, Ikuo Itoi

MS WANIDA with the wife of Malaysian Ambassador, Datin Rahman Mohd Lajis, Ms Zainun, Nik Khazami Nik Mohamed, the wife of the counselor; and Fauziah Md. Zin

MALAYSIAN Embassy hotshots: Mohd. Azmi Abu Zanin, Col. Abdul Hadi Hussin, Mr. Parameswaran, Sazali Mohd. Amin, and Suhaimi Shamsuddin

Bed rest may not relieve lower back pain

From page D3

have botox.

Bed rest not the best

Way back in 1986, a study already found that lower back pain patients who got two-days of bed rest recovered just as fast as those who were given four days. A 1995 study found that patients who continued with their usual daily activities (with pain being their guide) got better faster than those who were told to rest in bed for two days.

Studies like these are the bases for the current recommendation to avoid complete bed rest.

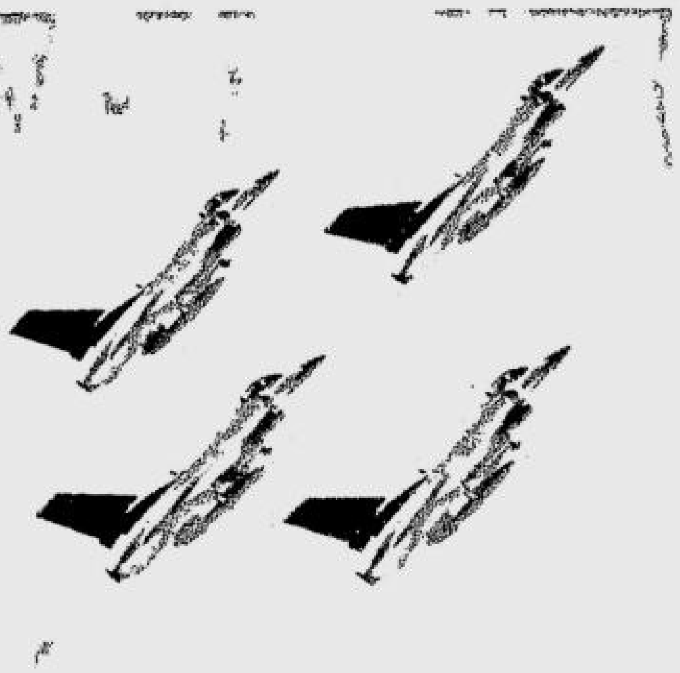
Keep on moving

A 1999 study published in Spine wanted to find out which exercise program was best for the lower back. Participants were divided into three formats done twice a week for 12 weeks: physical therapy exercises, muscle-conditioning exercises and low impact aerobics.

To the surprise of the researchers, all three programs improved pain relief and ability to do daily tasks, and reduced pain frequency. The study suggests that for chronic back pain sufferers, simply staying physically active may do the trick. Of course, you have to choose an activity that will not aggravate your lower back problem.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Philam Plans: The Home of Pre-Need Sales Aces!



What does it take to be an Ace in pre-need?
To be fearless and undaunted...
To soar and conquer great heights...
To be master of one's own course and direction...
To be an aviator second to none!

Creating the best sales professionals in the pre-need industry with the steely determination to triumph over all obstacles and challenges comes with a great task. It calls for a dependable company partner that provides a nourishing environment conducive to growth and development as well as the collective expertise and skill of the company's leaders.

Dependable Partner
It is only with a company truly dedicated to the pursuit of excellence do highly motivated individuals turn into achievers. It is only when the standards set are high when people learn to be their best. Only when sound, professional business practices are adhered to when people imbile genuine involvement and dedication.

Philam Plans, the eminent pre-need leader, is aware of its responsibility to create the best environment for its people. As the company continues to strive for excellence, so too, does it remain conscious that its business is, first and foremost, for the greater good of its people and its planholders.

This is why it always strives to attune its strategies and goals to meet the ever changing demands of a developing business environment, while consciously reinventing its effective and proven ways, to be adaptive to the needs of the future.

Solid Foundation
The company is not just a market leader and a trailblazer. Within its league, Philam Plans is an epitome of good corporate governance, complying not just with the statutory guidelines set by industry regulator Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), but also setting stricter standards for itself. As an affiliate of Philamlife, the country's insurance leader, and American International Group (AIG), one of the world's largest financial organizations, Philam Plans espouses and follows world-class business standards. It claims to be one of the few Sar-box compliant pre-need companies, boasting of good corporate practices unparalleled within its industry, ensuring planholders and the general public of fair business practices.

Commitment to Serve
To be worthy representatives of the Philam name, the company lavishes its sales force with training as well as to inspire them to perform that, which is asked of them – service par excellence! The company equips them with an armory of skills and service orientation as they pursue the mission to provide Filipinos better opportunities in life through pre-need planning. Through intensive training and development programs, learning sessions and other motivational activities, the Philam Plans salesforce not only become experts in their respective fields, they also assimilate the great responsibilities that come with their jobs.

It is through their noble efforts that Filipino families are able to face the future with a semblance of certainty. Living up to this noble ideals by servicing over 500,000 planholders whose retirements have been secured and whose children are sure to get an education.

Because of its high standards, exemplary business practices, and handsome remuneration for its people, Philam Plans remains to be the company of choice among pre-need professionals.

With 15,000 active sales force nationwide and still growing, the company is set to become a bigger family of top-brass pre-need professionals. This reflects on the growing number of people the company recognizes each year as its top sales achievers. Despite the tough situations and hostile economic conditions that challenged the pre-need industry in recent years, these extraordinary individuals have dedicated themselves to fulfilling the company's vision, all the while delivering outstanding sales and marketing performances marked with honor, courage and determination.

Philam Plans is proud to see that within its very midst, heroes roam its halls.

Honoring the TOP ACES of 2004
To honor its triumphant sales force who are considered the best in the industry, Philam Plans picks out its TOP GUNS in sales and fetes them to an elaborate awarding celebration befitting victors. More than a hundred honorees will be cited at the majestic Harbor Garden of the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel, a number far exceeding those of past years. This is but a telling sign that Philam Plans remains to be the premier nourishing ground of the sales Aces in pre-need.

But more than recognizing the efforts of each of the honorees, this event signifies something more grandiose for the company. This is the fact that Philam Plans employs and nurtures the best and the brightest of today's minds in the pre-need profession! As the company continues to take care of these people, they go on to do many great things not just for themselves but for the whole nation, proving that in the end, theirs and Philam Plans' is one great partnership of winners!

This was how the company envisions itself, home to the best sales aces of pre-need.

SA PHILAM PLANS... PANATAG KA!

Philam Plans
is aware of its responsibility to create the best
environment for its people. It remains conscious
that its business is, first and foremost,
for the greater good of its people
and its planholders.

To be worthy
representatives of the Philam name, the company
lavishes its sales force with rewards and incentives
to inspire them to perform that,
which is asked of them –
service par excellence!

In time,
they go on to do many great things
not just for themselves but for the whole
nation, proving that in the end,
theirs and Philam Plans'
is one great partnership
of winners!

ITINERARY

March 14, 2005	**President's Honor Corps Luncheon** Philamlife Tower Club, 11am
March 15, 2005	**Business Conference** Westin Philippine Plaza, 9am **Annual Awards Night** Westin Philippine Plaza, 4pm
March 16, 2005	**Bakasyon Grande/Globetrotters** **Departure for Bohol**, 7am-12pm **Departure for New York**, 8pm **Bohol City Tour**, 9am **Welcome Night Dinner** Baclayon Church Frontyard, 7pm
March 17, 2005	**Dolphin Watching** Pamilacan Island, 5am **Sportsfest** Bohol Beach Club, 10am **Fellowship Night Dinner** Bohol Beach Club, 7pm
March 18, 2005	**Departure for Manila**, 9am-4pm

Philam Plans Honors Those Who

TOP AWARDS
Top 10 Agency Managers

1st Place
Amelia S. Yap
Nickel Agency
Mindanao 1

2nd Place
Aurelio M. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

3rd Place
Remando E. Arcibal
Arcibal & Associates
Manila South 5

4th Place
Francisco B. Bautista
F.B. Bautista & Associates
Luzon 5

5th Place
Carolina B. Bautista
C.B. Bautista & Associates
Manila South 1

6th Place
Allan G. Tuazon
A.G. Tuazon & Associates
Luzon 4

7th Place
Grace M. Remo
G.M. Remo & Associates
Manila North 2

8th Place
Estela C. Hilario
Hilario & Associates
Manila South 1

9th Place
Soledad T. Villaher
Villahermosa & Ass
Manila South

8th Place
Jocelyn R. Santos
C.B.Bautista & Associates
Manila South 1

9th Place
Jannet E. Dulay
Dulay & Associates
Manila South 3

10th Place
Melinda L. Tizon
Tizon & Associates
Luzon 5

Top 10 Unit Managers

1st Place
Viviane E. Montano
Pedroso & Associates
Manila South 10

2nd Place
Julieta D. Subanal
Nickel Agency
Mindanao 1

3rd Place
Felly F. Ayate
F.N. Cervantes & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

4th Place
Arnolfo A. Piñero Jr.
W.A. Piñero & Associates
Mindanao 1

5th Place
Valentina C. Monte De Ramos
China Agency
Mindanao 1

Rol
Alm

4th Place
Arthur V. Ty
Mercado & Associates
Manila North 3

6th Place
Mary Anne S. Oliva
Villahermosa & Associates
Manila South 4

7th Place
Rolando S. Gonzales
Pedroso & Associates
Manila South 10

8th Place
Petra D. Uy
Mercury Agency
Mindanao 1

9th Place
Salvacion F. Jose
Almanzor & Associates
Manila South 8

10th Place
Edgardo H. Africa
Liwag & Associates
Manila North 2

11th Place
Conrado Q. Tan
Padilla & Associates
Manila South 1

12th Place
Joseph M. Supan
E.V. La Chica & Associates
Manila South 2

13th Place
Jocelyn F.Sant
Valderama & Asso
Manila South

RISING STAR AWARDS
Agency Managers

1st Place
Francisco N. Cervantes Jr.
F.N. Cervantes & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

2nd Place
Merlinda D. Teodoro
M.D. Teodoro & Associates
Manila North 5

3rd Place
Ma. Candice Y. Paras
C.Y. Paras & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

6th Place
Jose I. Madridejos
Mercury Agency
Mindanao 1

7th Place
Wenceslao A. Mission
Tizon & Associates
Luzon 5

8th Place
Angelita L. Garcia
Masa & Associates
Luzon 2

16th Place
Melborne Allan L. Espinosa
Pedroso & Associates
Manila South 10

17th Place
Amiel L. Garcia
Masa & Associates
Luzon 2

17th Place
Patricia Beatriz S. Dumayas
Dumayas & Associates
Luzon 2

18th Place
Estrella P. Frias
Dela Cruz & Associates
Luzon 1

19th Place
Betty B. Jover
N.J. Alcordo & Associates
Visayas 3

District Managers

1st Place
Melinda L.Tizon
Tizon & Associates
Luzon 5

2nd Place
Miriam G. Lao
Catague & Associates
Manila North 2

3rd Place
Valentino L.Cabello
Tizon & Associates
Luzon 5

5th Place
Sharon B. Handang
R.S. De Leon & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

6th Place
Carlos T. Jamandre
M.S. Jamandre & Associates
Manila South 1

M
Ar

Sales Counselors

1st Place
Petra D. Uy
Mercury Agency
Mindanao 1

3rd Place
Mary Anne S. Oliva
Villahermosa & Associates
Manila South 4

4th Place
Rolando S. Gonzales
Pedroso & Associates
Manila South 10

5th Place
Edgardo H. Africa
Liwag & Associates
Manila North 2

6th Place
Joseph M. Supan
E.V. La Chica & Associates
Manila South 2

J
Vald

PRESIDENT'S HONOR

AGENCY MANAGERS
Amelia S. Yap
Remando E. Arcibal
Francisco B. Bautista
Carolina B. Bautista
Allan G. Tuazon
Grace M. Remo
Estela C. Hilario
Soledad T. Villahermosa
Romerico H. Dulay
Victoria M. Crizaldo
Ariel A. Comia
Janet L. Ramos
Nimfa J. Alcordo
Eduardo C. Benetua

DISTRICT MANAGERS
Alma C. Clariño
Eric T. Bautista
Maria Flor B. Rodriguez
Gloria G. Tuazon
Rosario P. Andrada
Adolfo C. Remo

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Top 10 District Managers

mosa
iciates

10th Place
Eduardo C. Benetua
Benetua & Associates
Manila South 6

1st Place
Alma C. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

2nd Place
Adolfo C. Remo
G.M. Remo & Associates
Manila North 2

3rd Place
Noel R. Magsino
Arcibal & Associates
Manila South 5

4th Place
Rosario P. Andrada
Benetua & Associates
Manila South 6

5th Place
Wilfrido R. Villahermosa
Villahermosa & Associates
Manila South 4

6th Place
Eric T. Bautista
Bautista & Associates
Luzon 5

7th Place
Maria Flor B. Rodriguez
Hilario & Associates
Manila South 1

6th Place
ando L. Almanzor
anzor & Associates
Manila South 8

7th Place
Medelyn P. Gutierrez
R.G. Santos & Associates
Manila North 7

8th Place
Abegale Courant C. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

9th Place
Danilo O. Teodoro
M.D. Teodoro & Associates
Manila North 5

10 Place
Teresita P. Uy
Gen. McArthur Agency
Visayas 1

Top 20 Sales Counselors

1st Place
Ma Cecilia J. Roldan
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

2nd Place
Enrique G. Perez
A.G. Tuazon & Associates
Luzon 4

3rd Place
Oscar L. Gue
Nickel Agency
Mindanao 1

s
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14th Place
Michael Angelo B. Florendo
Tan & Associates
Manila North 2

15th Place
Melissa N. Espinosa
Pedroso & Associates
Manila South 10

16th Place
Victoria T. Lopez
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

17th Place
Edna D. Elipe
A.M. Lodonia & Associates
Mindanao 1

18th Place
Zaida M. Mago
Borreo & Associates
Manila South 1

19th Place
Maxima G. Perez
Fernandez & Associates
Manila South 1

20th Place
Fernando L. Garcia
F.B. Bautista & Associates
Luzon 5

7th Place
rites A. Labasan
ibal & Associates
lanila South 5

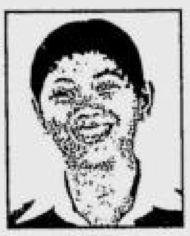
8th Place
Hamilcar T. Arregadas
Pilapil & Associates
Luzon 6

9th Place
Josephine V. Hipulan
Villahermosa & Associates
Manila South 4

Unit Managers

1st Place
Felly F. Ayate
F.N. Cervantes & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

2nd Place
Stephen T. Villahermosa
Villahermosa & Associates
Manila South 4



3rd Place
Abegale Courant C. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

4th Place
Jina Perpetua S. Adarme
E.V. La Chica & Associates
Manila South 2

5th Place
Elsa T. Galino
Catague & Associates
Manila North 2

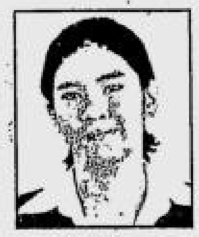
7th Place
celyn E. Santos
rama & Associates
lanila South 3

8th Place
Victorino T. Montano
Pedroso & Associates
Manila South 10

9th Place
Anna Cristine C. Clariño
Clariño & Associates
Manila North 7

10th Place
Josephine R. Aguiling
Arcibal & Associates
Manila South 5

11th Place
Virginia A. Dagandan
Martin & Associates
Manila North 2



12th Place
Candice T. Ybuan
Benetua & Associates
Manila South 6

13th Place
Ma. Soledad A.Madridejos
Mercury Agency
Mindanao 1

14th Place
Manuel Brian L. Belleza
F.N. Cervantes & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

15th Place
Michael DG Mira
F.N. Cervantes & Associates
Direct Marketing (ADD)

C O R P S

UNIT MANAGERS
Rolando L. Almanzor
Arnolfo A. Piñero Jr.
Paulina J. Delos Reyes

SALES COUNSELORS
Jose F. Salvacion
Enrique G. Perez
Fernando L. Garcia

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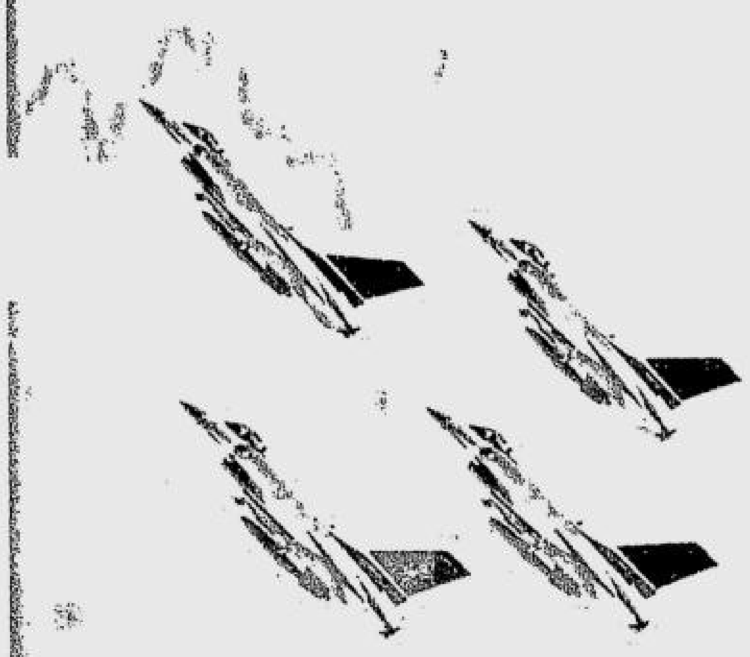


Philam Plans' Award for Marketing Excellence:

Honor and Recognition Befitting its Best Aces

For sixteen years, this company has risen to the forefront of the pre-need industry. Whether it was helping the Filipino family secure a bright future for their child, fulfill their retirement dream, or live a worry-free life even at the time of their greatest need, Philam Plans proudly answered the call to serve, never once doubting that every Filipino, rich or poor, deserves the right to a happy, comfortable and secured tomorrow. The Company could not have made this on its own. It needed people who were ready to take on this call, people who were passionate about their work and totally committed to providing a better life for the Filipino family.

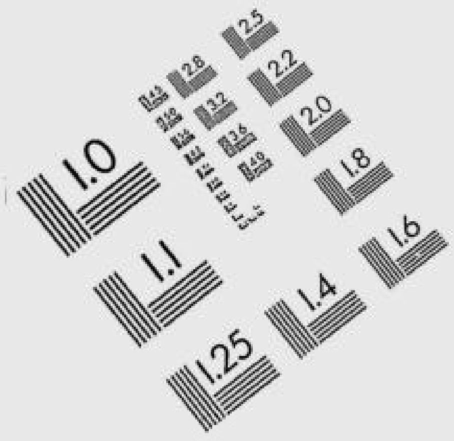
Philam Plans prides itself for having the best sales associates dedicated to this goal. Amongst the company's agencies, twenty five (25) of the very best have gone beyond expectations, breaking the highest pre-need records ever marked in the company's history, deserving the distinction to be recognized as one of the company's top ace.

Their story is one of courage and bravery, of passion and determination, which earned for them the highest honor befitting of any Philam Plans agency. They are the recipients of Philam Plans' Award for Marketing Excellence (AME).

The Award for Marketing Excellence is not just another recognition. Rather, it is a symbol of true achievement that can only be met through passionate excellence, unyielding commitment and the savvy courage that sees through the achievement of a mission.

For a sales agency, receiving the award is not only a cause for joyous celebration. It is also a powerful statement that resonates far and wide, boldly declaring that excellence is ingrained in the agency's way of life. Only the very best qualify for it and once bestowed the AME, the agency is expected to continue meeting the ever-increasing expectations that go with the award. Truly, the Award for Marketing Excellence is not for all.

Congratulations to the recipients of the Award for Marketing Excellence! May you continue to be driven by your call to serve and set new record-breaking performances for Philam Plans today and in the future years!



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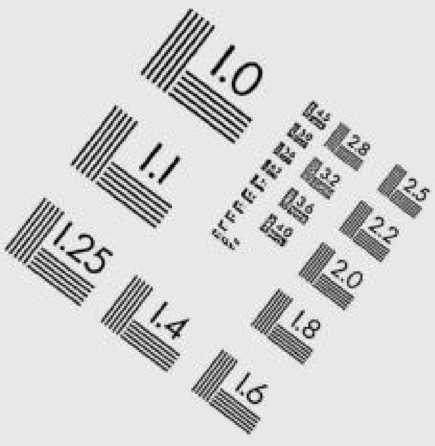

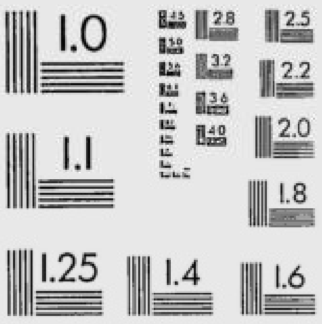
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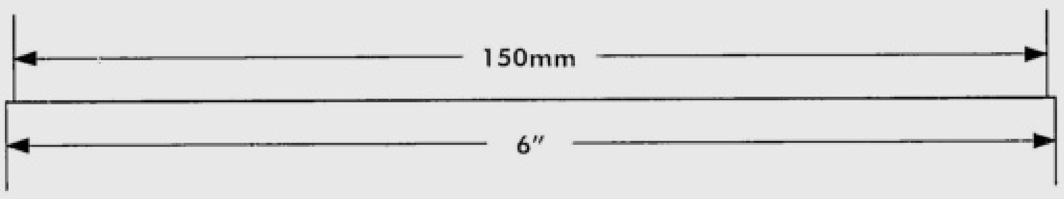

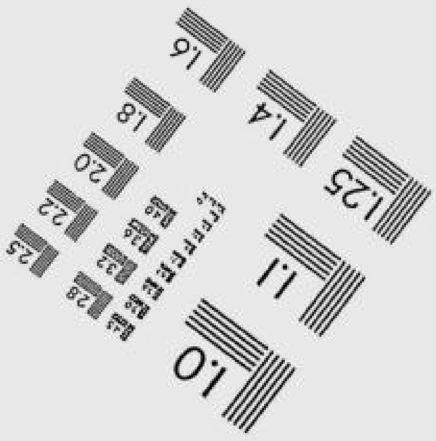

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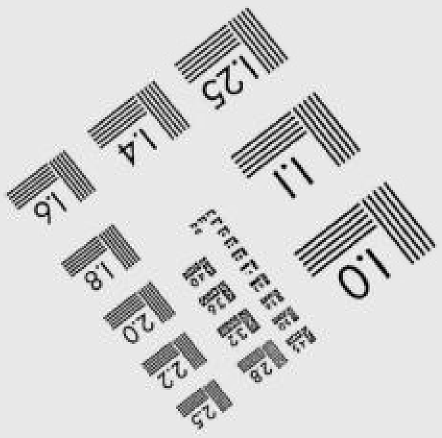

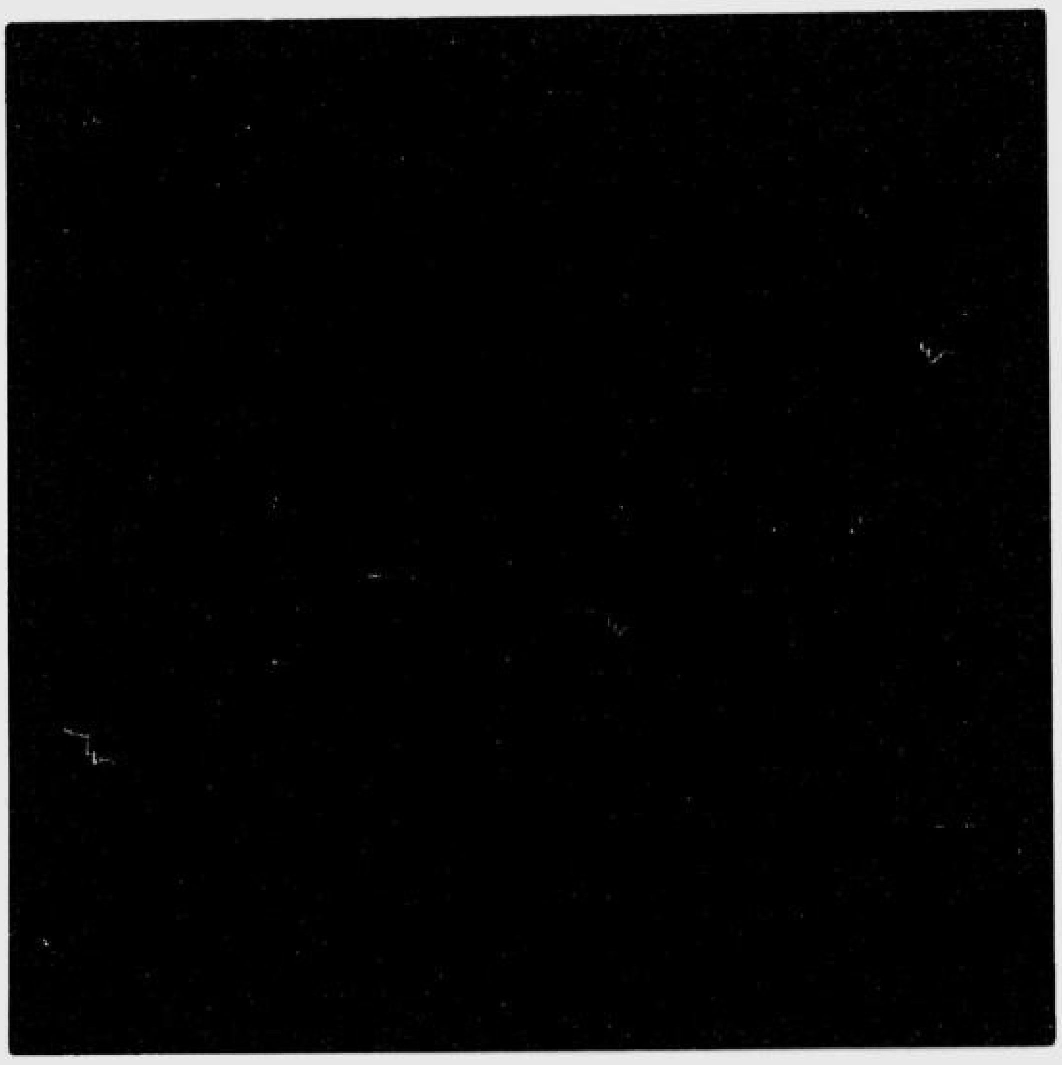

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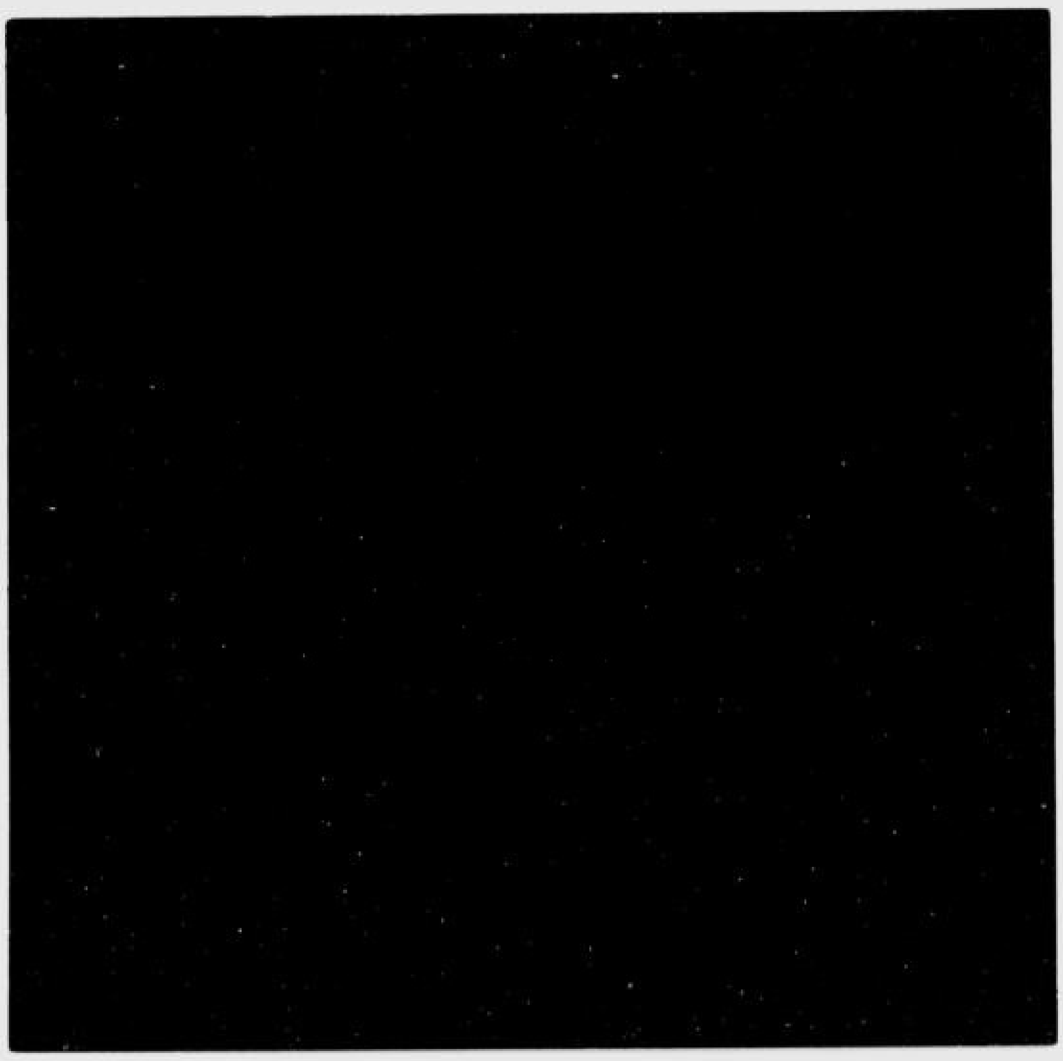

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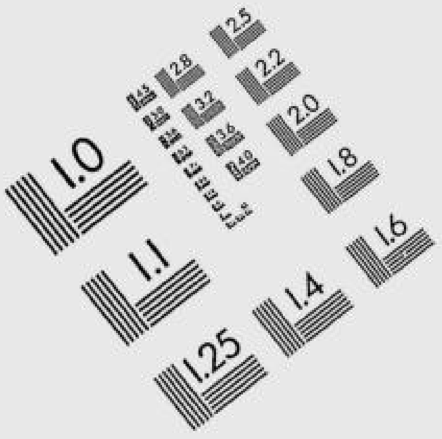
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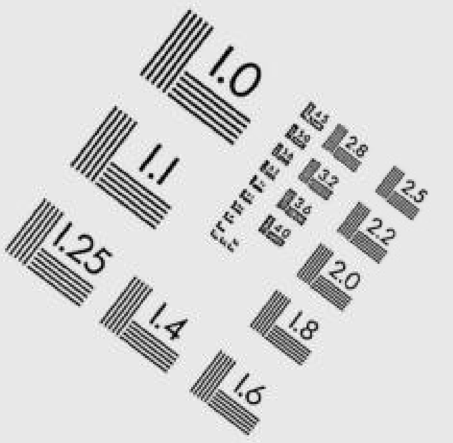
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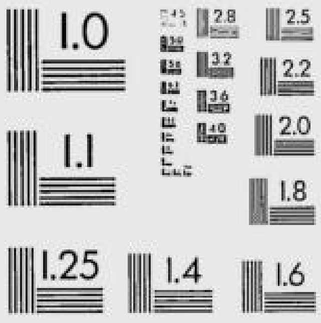
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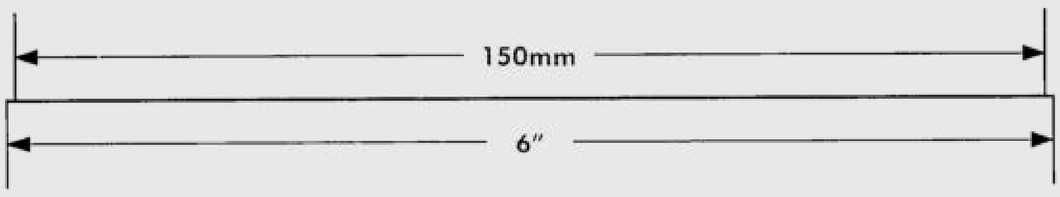

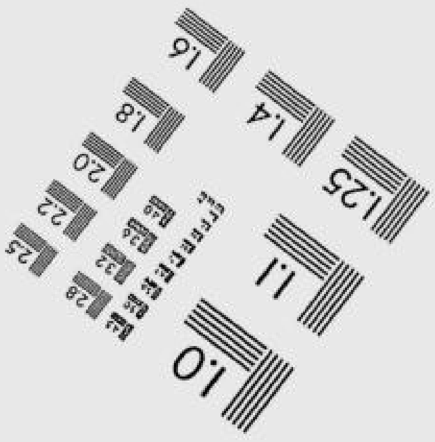
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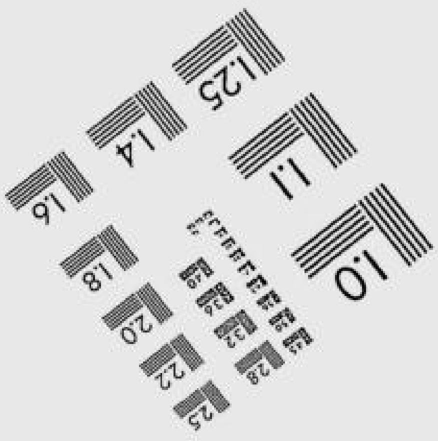
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